The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. Schwartz
Ak	Akathistos Hymn
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CPG	*Clavis Patrum Graecorum*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
NRSV	*New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 1857–
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 1844–
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. R. Graffin, F. Nau *et al.*, Paris, 1903–
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*

the many sorts of problem which life brings. I thank them warmly both for their empathy and practical help.

To the editor of my volume, Dr Clive Tolley, is due the greatest thanks for ensuring the work is now in our hands, for in him are united some rare fields of expertise such as competence both in the classical languages and in Finnish. As a translator (notably of *Beowulf* into Finnish) it would also have been within his capabilities to work the text of the Akathistos into a more poetic form than the word for word rendering required by philological research. I thank him for reverently attending to the polishing of my text, and for his advice and constant collaboration.

I dedicate my work to my husband Paavo Pirttimaa, who has supported me in my work from his whole heart.

PREFACE

The present study belongs to the field of early Byzantine Mariological research. But its subject—the Akathistos Hymn—belongs not just to the past, for it is a part of the living liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church. The multitude of prayers and iconography created on the model of the Akathistos proclaim its influence and its unique position in Orthodox spirituality. Yet despite its central position in early Byzantine hymnography and theology the hymn has never been assigned a firm historical context within which a convincing theological and philological interpretation might be proffered. Much unfounded speculation has to be cleared out of the way in this process, such as the dating of the hymn to the siege of Constantinople in 626, or the association of it with the feast of the Annunciation, which was only established around 530 to 553, or the reading into it of the theology of the Council of Chalcedon and hence its ascription to Romanos the Melodist (d. 562).

I shall endeavour in this study to demonstrate that the most likely historical context for the hymn's composition is the period between the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). The usual response to this early dating is to recoil, objecting (without argumentation) that "it can't be that early"; I shall show that such a response is ill-founded. One of the fallacies underlying this sort of response stems from the categorization of the hymn within the genre of the kontakion, made on the basis of its metrical pattern: yet this categorization does not eliminate an early dating, for it ignores the most distinctive feature of the hymn, its salutations. That these are associated with the Council of Ephesus has been accepted in previous studies; I argue that in fact the Mariology of the hymn as a whole fits a context of Ephesus, and that a composition at a later date is rendered unlikely as this would mean the hymn, unlike any other theological work, failed to reflect the updated Christology of later (especially post-Chalcedonian) periods.

It is hoped that the present volume will help to put the study of the Akathistos Hymn, and of early Mariology in general, on a firmer intellectual basis, and also encourage a more informed regard for the hymn amongst those for whom it is a treasured spiritual gem.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What is the Akathistos Hymn?

The "Akathistos" is an anonymous and undated hymn, considered to be a masterpiece of Byzantine hymnography. Its subject is the Incarnation, but it is a composition in praise of Mary, as indicated by the twelve series of twelve salutations addressed to Mary as the Birth-giver of God. The Greek word ἀκάθιστος means 'not sitting' and points to the tradition of the hymn's performance. In so far as the sources of the Synaxarion are to be believed the priesthood and laity of Constantinople sang this very hymn standing for an all-night service of thanksgiving in the church of Blakhernai, showing their thanks to the Mother of God, by whose help the hostile besiegers of the city had perished.[1] This took place on 7 August in the year 626 under Emperor Heraclius, when Sergius was patriarch. In these circumstances the lines which have made the hymn famous may have been attached as an introduction:

> To you, our leader in battle and defender,
> O Theotokos, I, your city, delivered from sufferings,
> ascribe hymns of victory and thanksgiving.
> Since you are invincible in power,
> free me from all kinds of dangers,
> that I may cry to you:
> "Hail, bride unwedded".[2]

By means of the Akathistos the Constantinopolitans thereafter expressed their gratitude for deliverance from many other threatening situations,

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[1] *PG* 92.1352B: Ὅγε μὲν θεοφιλὴς τῆς Κωνσταντίνου λαὸς τῇ θεομήτορι τὴν χάριν ἀφοσιούμενοι, ὁλονύκτιον τὸν ὕμνον καὶ ἀκάθιστον αὐτῇ ἐμελῴδησαν, ὡς ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀγρυπνησάσῃ καὶ ὑπερφυεῖ δυνάμει διαπραξαμένῃ τὸ κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν τρόπαιον. ... Ἀκάθιστον δὲ ὠνόμασαν, διὰ τὸ τότε οὕτω πρᾶξαι τὸν τῆς πόλεως κλῆρόν τε καὶ λαὸν ἅπαντα. "The devout people of Constantinople, showing their thanks to the Mother of God, stood the night through and sang this hymn to her who by vigilance and supernatural power had brought about a triumph over their enemies. ... It was named the Akathistos because the clergy and whole people of the city performed it in this way then." All translations in this volume are the author's unless noted otherwise.

[2] Trypanis (1968), 17–39: Prooemium II (ibid. 19–20, 29–30).

and so in the course of the centuries it became the Greeks' 'thanksgiving hymn of victory'.[3] But what Church feast the hymn was originally written for can only be guessed at. The oldest sources associate it with the feast of the Annunciation (Εὐαγγελισμός) on 25 March, but it is now considered likely that its original context was the feast of the Nativity. In that case it may date back to the fifth century, to a time before the confirmation, around 530–53, of the feast of the Annunciation by Emperor Justinian I.[4] In the festal calendar of the present-day Orthodox Church the place of the Akathistos is the eve of Saturday (i.e. the preceding Friday evening) of the fifth week of Lent.[5] At that time it is chanted in its entirety in all Orthodox churches throughout the world. But before that it is sung in four parts on each Friday starting from the first week of Lent, so that the Akathistos characterizes the whole Orthodox world's preparation for Easter. As the Akathistos is a living part of the liturgical tradition of the Church, countless people feel a personal relationship to it. Hence it has come to form a part of the spirituality and cultural mentality of those within the sphere of the eastern rite, especially of the Greeks.

The text of the Akathistos is preserved in part or in whole in innumerable manuscripts from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries. The *editio princeps* is from 1501.[6] The critical edition following modern standards, based on nine manuscripts, is the work of C. A. Trypanis.[7] It appeared in 1968 in the work *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*. The introduction to this edition brings together the essential knowledge about the Akathistos up to that time. The broad bibliography of earlier works indicates how deeply the mystery of the Akathistos—its time of origin, its authorship, which feast it was intended for, what its distinct form signifies, and so

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[3] Trypanis (1968), 21.

[4] Trypanis (1968), 17–18. Cf. Fletcher (1958), 61–2.

[5] Cf. "Saturday in the fifth week on which we sing the Akathistos Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos", *The Lenten Triodion* (1984), 419–46. The research of Spadaro (1989) has uncovered no exemplification of a festival of the Akathistos before the ninth century.

[6] Included in *Poetae Christiani Veteres*, edited by Aldus Manutius in Venice.

[7] Trypanis's chosen texts are exclusively from *kontakaria* (1968: 26), a collection of hymns called *kontakia* (on the kontakion, see ibid. 18–19); cf. the attack on Trypanis by Grosdidier de Matons (1980–1), 31. Several editions are based on only one manuscript; exceptional are the outdated Pitra (1876) and Christ and Paranikas (1871). Wellesz (1957) takes into account the textual variants of Pitra's edition. Wellesz's edition is based on a thirteenth-century manuscript (Cod. Laur. Ashburnhamensis 64). It is known for being the oldest manuscript containing music to all the stanzas of the Akathistos.

forth—has occupied the minds of researchers.[8] After the publication of Trypanis's research the position changed. The fathoming of the mystery had clearly reached saturation point, since in the last couple of decades published research has most often reflected Trypanis's position: that the Akathistos may possibly be the work of the famous hymnographer Romanos the Melodist, dating from the time of the Emperor Justinian in the earlier sixth century. I will assess Trypanis's views not at this point, but in the chapter "State of the Research", where I present the history and the present position of Akathistos research on the basis of Trypanis's introduction. Researchers have not however been dissuaded from pursuing the riddle of the Akathistos,[9] nor has the hymn itself lost its importance in comparative research.[10] The continuing relevance and interest of the Akathistos is shown by the numerous translations, of which the greatest number are revisions.[11] In the XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies, held at Copenhagen in 1996, the Akathistos was in fact the subject of six presentations.

When the amount of information that has accrued on the different aspects of the Akathistos, and the number of investigations of which it forms the basis, are examined from a bibliographical point of view, it is astonishing that no complete analysis of its contents based on philological research has ever been made. Many facts are known about the Akathistos, but the poem itself remains unknown. It has never been the subject of any intellectual tradition of research in which its theological content could be investigated on the basis of the one reality we can appeal to—the text itself. And although the influence of the Akathistos is seen in Marian hymnography and poetry and it is referred to as the foundation of Mariology, there has been no systematic analysis of what the hymn's assertions about Mary, the epithets in the form of 144 salutations, are based upon.[12]

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[8] Cf. Krypiakiewicz (1909), 380–2; Mitsakis (1971b), 533–6; Szövérffy (1978), 116–35.

[9] E.g. Detorakis (1993), Malaspina (1996).

[10] De Andrés Martínez (1981), Filonov Gove (1988), Pätzold (1989), Chatzifoti (1994), Lafontaine-Dosogne (1984), Spadaro (1989), Toniolo (1989), Vereecken (1993), Theodorou (1995), Felmy (1996), Schiødt (1995).

[11] See the list (which includes only western European languages and is not even complete) under Akathistos Hymn in the Sources section of the Bibliography, to which may be added Koder (1996), 191–205; *The Lenten Triodion* (1984), 422–36.

[12] The same is true of the Latin tradition. Latin versions of the Akathistos are to be traced back to the ninth century, cf. Huglo (1951), and it is general knowledge that under the influence of the Akathistos arose "such a profusion of salutation hymns, sequences,

Modern scholarship classifies the Akathistos among the Byzantine kontakia on the basis of its metrical pattern of strophes without salutations. This classification, however, provokes the question of how the salutations are to be explained, as their presence distinguishes the Akathistos from the typical kontakion. On the other hand even today the Akathistos is characterized as a 'metrical sermon', the name by which the famous hymnographic researcher Paul Maas described the kontakia.[13] But 'metrical sermon' clearly does not capture the essential characteristic of the Akathistos, for, just like the Constantinopolitans, researchers agree unanimously that the hymn is most suited to the celebration of victory. Apart from this, the Akathistos is by no means a "rhetorical encomium, akin to imperial panegyrics, drawn up after the topoi of poetical encomia".[14] It is fundamentally a Christian hymn, whose purposes the brilliant rhetorical skill serves, not the other way round. The riddle of the Akathistos indeed is at its profoundest in the relationship between the form and content, so clearly the solution to the riddle has to explain why this hymn in particular contains a series of salutations to Mary. Thus the question of what the Akathistos is still calls for an answer.

Subject and Aim of the Study

The aim of my research is to patch the hole in Akathistos research spoken of above by deploying the methodology I am about to outline. My previous research has revealed to me how haphazard the interpretation of a metaphorical statement can be when the context is not entirely clear, as well as showing how multifarious the uses of language can be in a Christian context. Merely a wide knowledge of Marian texts is no guarantee of pertinence of interpretation, and analysis of itself does not necessarily elicit viable interpretations. The present work aims to carry

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salutation psalms and litanies that it is impossible to reckon their number", cf. *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, s.v. "Maria", hl. col. 251. I leave out of consideration Limberis (1987), who betrays a lack of understanding of metaphor and linguistic contextuality.

[13] Cf. Maas (1910), 289.

[14] So claims Limberis (1994), 92–7, but she fails to show the topoi of the poetical encomium in the Akathistos. This is no wonder, since even the teachers of rhetoric shied away from placing the hymn among encomial productions, because the hymn had "its own tradition based on religious and philosophical conceptions" (Viljamaa 1968: 25).

out an analysis of the content of the Akathistos without dissolving into a mere list of interpretations of the Marian epithets.

Since it is clear that the whole content and message of the Akathistos is reflected in the depiction of Mary, it is self-evident that an analysis of the content will have to be made by reference to this depiction. With the investigation of the image of Mary may also be linked the dating of the hymn. Paul Maas had suspected that an analysis of the salutations would form the best basis for the dating,[15] but clearly the salutations should not be considered as a self-contained entity, nor should the analysis be a catalogue of paraphrases of the salutations. The difficulty lies in the fact that the Theotokos, the Birth-giver of God, may be conceptualized in just the same way today as a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago. Thus although the text of the hymn must form the concrete basis for dating, the mere presence of an image of Mary consistent with any date in the last fifteen hundred years cannot in itself be used as an argument for dating. Hence a method is needed which avoids this fallacy.

I see the image of Mary in the Akathistos as an assemblage of conceptual elements: when this assemblage is related to a known stage in the doctrinal development, it is possible in principle to distinguish what does not belong. The difficulty is that early Mariology, by which I mean the teaching and the ideas of the Church Fathers about Mary and the cult of Mary during the period preceding the Council of Ephesus (431), has scarcely been researched, so I have had to formulate an overview of this early patristic tradition for myself. This formulation has indeed made possible a coherent narrative interpretation of the hymn related to a specific timeframe.

The subject of the study is the image of Mary as it appears in the Akathistos Hymn. The 'image' means the description of Mary composed by an anonymous author of the hymn several centuries after the death of Mary. The source of the description is of course not the physical Mary, but the tradition, the cult and the written word which transmitted experience and knowledge of Mary, with which the author must have been familiar. The author participated in the religious discourse of the Fathers of the Church: the discussions of the Fathers on the significance of Mary and the doctrines of the Church were the framework within which the author described Mary. The description of Mary is accommodated, but not limited, to the narrative of the Incarnation: the

[15] Maas (1905), 644.

hymn has in addition a clear ascetical tone. These different aspects are reflected in the image of Mary in the hymn and form an array of conceptual elements. The aim of the study is to draw out these conceptual elements into a structure of the image of Mary.

Methodological Considerations

The usual approach to the Akathistos runs somewhat as follows. The hymn is viewed as a work reflecting the doctrine and cult of Mary in the first few centuries; it is an important Christological document from the early Byzantine period. Its elucidation, and the clarification of the stage in the development of the doctrine of the Incarnation it represents, call for an analysis which takes the whole text into account and at the same time goes into detail. Such an analysis is to be carried out following the practices of homily research and using classical philological methods: the manuscripts are listed, the context surveyed, the homiletic content is analysed, biblical and patristic allusions are identified, and doctrinal emphases and the vocabulary and rhetoric are investigated.

But the Akathistos Hymn is not a homily. It cannot be analysed without paying special attention to its metaphorical language, and to the structure of its image of Mary. These features—which form the subject of the present study—cannot be explained by means of the traditional methods outlined above. A different approach is taken here, which is explained below. The first task, however, is to place the Akathistos in a historical context: the evidence of the text itself, rather than secondary sources, is used to suggest the most plausible setting.

Let us consider briefly the history of textual transmission and what it can reveal. The manuscript tradition does not offer much help in dating the Akathistos or in defining the context of its origin: the oldest preserved Byzantine manuscripts are only from the ninth century. The Akathistos itself has been transmitted together with the works of Romanos the Melodist in so-called 'kontakaria'. These are collections dating from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries which contain works of many medieval hymnographers, of which the most ancient are late fifth century.[16] From the kontakaria derives the information that the Akathistos was sung at the feast of the Annunciation. Textual variants in the

[16] Trypanis (1968), 9–13.

hymn reveal little of significance;[17] the only exception concerns the word 'Persians' (9.16), which in two later manuscripts becomes the word 'believers'.[18] The description in the Synaxarion of the service of thanksgiving to the Mother of God in the time of Patriarch Sergius, and the explanation of why the hymn came to be called 'Not sitting down', look reliable. For the assumption that the hymn was moreover composed in these circumstances there is, however, no more foundation than one thirteenth-century manuscript which names Sergius as author of the hymn. As far as Romanos is concerned, the first time it is claimed he was author of the Akathistos was in some probably sixteenth-century marginalia added to a thirteenth-century manuscript:[19] the notion wholly lacks the authority of ancient testimony. It is clear that a theory of dating cannot be based on these materials, even though it is on just these pieces of 'information' that suppositions about the time of the composition of the Akathistos are habitually based. A concrete basis for hypotheses of dating is to be found, however, in comparative materials.

Comparative material is not hymnographic, since, leaving aside the output of Romanos, there is simply not sufficient early hymnographic literature to put to use.[20] The hymns of Romanos are to be left to one side to avoid begging the question of the direction of influence. We are left therefore with homiletic material, which, following the accepted practice of early Byzantine hymnographic research, is used as comparative source material in the present study. It exists in sufficient quantity and variety to serve this purpose.

Salutations in praise of Mary reminiscent of those of the Akathistos make their appearance in homilies after the Council of Ephesus. Since beginning research on the Akathistos scholars have seen the salutations of the hymn as an allusion to the Council of Ephesus, which declared Mary to be the Birth-giver of God (Theotokos). It is of course the case that a text, and above all a Christian hymn, may relate to an event which took place in a distant time and place without necessarily originating in that time or place. But an appeal to the logical possibility that the Akathistos might be from a later age, or to the fact that there happens to be a gap of two hundred years between the Council of Ephesus and the first extant record of the hymn, does not lessen the

[17] Trypanis lists all the textual variants in his edition.
[18] Trypanis (1968), 33.
[19] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 36; Cod. Thessalonicensis Blataion 41 (f. 193r).
[20] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 28–32.

clear Ephesian connection of the hymn (and note that the information of the Synaxarion about the name given to this already existing hymn tells us nothing about the age of the hymn).[21] On the other hand, the salutations provide a basis on which to formulate a hypothesis that Ephesus provides the most likely context for the hymn to have originated in.

The verification of the hypothesis depends on the use of primary and secondary literary sources. The Acts of the Councils (of Nicaea 325, Constantinople 381, Ephesus 431, Chalcedon 451, Constantinople 553) as they touch upon the development of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the Christology and Mariology of Proclus of Constantinople and Homily 39, ascribed to Basil of Seleucia (and dating to before 449), form the primary evidence for the praise of Mary. Confirmatory evidence is provided by various historical sources which indicate the trends of thought in the period of Ephesus.

In determining the context of the origin of the Akathistos Christological evidence is decisive. The image of Mary in the Akathistos is accommodated to the story of the Incarnation—in fact it is the hymnographer's interpretation of the significance of the Incarnation. Can the hymn's narrative then be compared to the homilies, which can be placed in a known historical doctrinal context?

This question is relevant because it is generally considered extremely difficult, if not impossible, to place the theological issues appearing in a poetic text in a likely historical context.[22] The same approach, from a slightly different angle, holds that the metaphorical language prevents a determination of the theological content of the hymn, since it is not technical in the same sense as for example the terminology of the affirmation of faith of Chalcedon. Hence any attempt to use the theological content as a criterion of dating is pre-empted. But such approaches seem unsupportable: the homilists of the fifth century who deal with Christological material use a corresponding metaphorical language themselves, a language which is used in particular to proclaim the theological status of Mary.[23] In other words metaphorical language in itself does not form an obstacle to dating or the interpretation of content.

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[21] Cf. the text of Prooemium II.

[22] See for example Limberis (1987), 1 ff.

[23] Cf. the table in Caro (1971–3), 685; especially on Proclus of Constantinople see Constas (1995), 176 ff.

It is quite another matter that the context in which the metaphors of Mary originated or their history are unknown, since these have never been systematically investigated. In the section on "The Metaphorical Language", I deepen the theoretical aspect of the issue and consider concrete examples.

The discovery of H. G. Beck that a precise dogmatic teaching against heresy is visible in the earliest liturgical poetry (the troparia)[24] confirms my belief that hymnography should not be isolated from theological tractates *a priori* because of its poetic language. Regrettably hymnographic research has not dealt with this matter, so there has been no model to follow in approaching the problem. I have resolved the issue by means of a conceptual analysis. On the basis of patristic literature I have set out three fundamental Mariological concepts, the 'Virgin', the 'Second Eve' and the 'Theotokos', which I present in the section on "The Concepts". In these the teaching of the Church and the Fathers on Mary up to Ephesus is encapsulated in three easily deployed pithy expressions. The methodological challenge lies in seeing how well these concepts suit the analysis of the metaphorical language of the Akathistos and whether the content of the hymn can be elucidated any better than simply by the method derived from classical philology.

In practice there is a great difference between conceptual analysis and the traditional method. The concepts enable the hymn's image of Mary to be broken down into parts in a logical way and to be built into a new entity, in which the ideological and theological layers hidden in the hymn's narrative become evident. 'In a logical way' means that as there are no suitable tools, the 144 epithets of the hymn must be analysed individually. In the classical approach this means that corresponding epithets or expressions are sought in comparative materials. Only then is it noticed that a great many of the epithets of the Akathistos have no corresponding equivalents in the homilies. They cannot be found, for it is only the narrative of the hymn which motivates them. Secondly it is noticed that in those cases where the same or a similar epithet is discovered there is only any immediate benefit for the interpretation of the Akathistos if the context is exactly the same—and as a rule it is not, since the narrative of the hymn is of a unique kind. And thirdly it is noticed that since the central words such as 'virgin' or 'Theotokos' are repeated so often, and gathered from numerous levels of significance, the same

[24] Beck (1959), 263.

word does not necessarily unfold in the same way in the Akathistos as in the comparative material. Finally, the benefit gained by exhausting and time-consuming comparative work on the text is very small, since the image of Mary arising from the narrative of the Akathistos, and the structure of the hymn, cannot be explained on the basis of those few chance epithets garnered by this method.

The question of the interpretative suitability of the conceptual analysis as compared with the classical philological method is far too complex to give a general answer to. My analysis must speak for itself. My work in the field of the metaphorical language of the Akathistos has strongly influenced my view of Byzantine hymnography in general—hymns in this tradition need to be seen not merely as poetry but as contributions to theology. Moreover they provide an understanding of the times in which they were written. If they wish to progress in the investigation of hymnography, researchers must confront the difficulty of interpreting the metaphorical language it employs, which is concerned with meanings rather than rhetorical forms. For this reason methods other than the traditional classical model have to be tried.

CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIPTION OF THE HYMN

The Structure and the Subject

The hymn consists of twenty-four strophes (*oikoi*). The initial letters form an acrostic according to the Greek alphabet.[1] Starting from the first strophe every other one (i.e. every odd one) contains one of a series of twelve salutations directed to Mary. It is followed by the refrain "Hail, bride unwedded" (χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε).[2] The even strophes conclude with the refrain "Alleluia" (ἀλληλούϊα),[3] which appears three times without object, eight times addressed to Christ and once to Mary.[4] Once the salutations and refrains are stripped from the entire hymn, the poem's structure is laid bare—twenty-four metrically identical strophes.[5] Due to the metrical pattern of these strophes the Akathistos is classified into the genre of kontakion. The question of the kontakion's metre and the Akathistos otherwise remains perforce on a level of principle.[6]

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[1] Cf. *RAC*, s.v. "Alphabetische Akrostichis"; Krumbacher (1903); Mitsakis (1971b), index, s.v. ἀκροστιχίδα, also pp. 95–7; *Marienlexikon*, s.v. "Akrostichis". An alphabetical acrostic is found for instance in the anonymous hymn "On the Virgin Mary" (Trypanis 1968: 159–64), and in three liturgical hymns of the fifth century (Gassisi 1909: 334–53).

[2] Lampe (1961): "ἀνύμφευτος, *unwedded, virgin.*" The refrain νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε can be translated in different ways, e.g. Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary translate "Bride without bridegroom". Sometimes it is translated "Bride Ever-Virgin", but this is too free a translation, especially because the word 'ever-virgin' (ἀειπάρθενος) does not appear in the hymn at all.

[3] Cf. *RAC*, s.v. "Alleluja". The exclamation 'Halleluja' is Hebrew, and means 'praise the Lord'.

[4] Without object: 2, 4, 6; to Christ: 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22; to Mary: 24.

[5] See the scheme of the structure in Lattke (1991), 304. Cf. Filonov Gove (1988), 12; Trypanis (1968), 27–8.

[6] The Akathistos has its own unique metrical pattern. It has two alternating refrains and the odd and even strophes do not have the same number of lines, i.e. their metrical structures are not identical, see Trypanis (1968), 27–8, cf. Filonov Gove (1988), 17–20: "The Meter of the Oikoi", 22–6: "The Meter of the Chairetismoi". The distinctive features of the kontakion, the regulated accents within a colon and the metre consisting of strophic patterns, do not suffice to clarify at what level of development the Akathistos is to be placed. The recognized instance in which an interrelationship exists between a hymn of Romanos and the Akathistos ("On Joseph II", Maas and Trypanis 1963: no. 44, has the metrical pattern of the Akathistos, i.e. heirmos Ἄγγελος πρωτοστάτης (on the

Three prooemia are found in the manuscripts used by Trypanis: Τὸ προσταχθὲν μυστικῶς,[7] Τῇ ὑπερμαχῷ στρατηγῷ[8] and Οὐ παυόμεθα.[9] The first prooemium in Trypanis's edition, Τὸ προσταχθὲν μυστικῶς, contains the 'theological argument' of the whole hymn.[10] Grosdidier de Matons does not consider Prooemia I and III as original and dates them to the sixth century.[11] The notion that the hymn had no prooemia originally is very important, but to prove it would demand an investigation of manuscripts. However, the fact that Trypanis presents the hymn without Prooemia I and III in his later Akathistos publication of 1971[12] suggests that he thought that the hymn was originally written without them. Furthermore, he dates the anonymous hymn without prooemia tentatively to the fifth century. I will take Prooemium I into account in the interpretation of the Christology of the hymn, because I agree with other scholars that it presents the hymn's theological argument.[13] No notice need be taken of Prooemium II, Τῇ ὑπερμαχῷ στρατηγῷ, which has become a symbol of the hymn, since it refers not to the content of the hymn, but to the historical situation when it came to prominence.[14] It is ascribed by Trypanis to Sergius (seventh century). The third, very short prooemium contains the angel Gabriel's greeting, "Hail, favoured one" (χαῖρε, ἡ κεχαριτωμένη, Luke 1.28; *NRSV* has "Greetings" for "Hail"). It

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scheme see ibid. 532), cf. Grosdidier de Matons 1977: 35, Mitsakis 1971b: 503–4) does not justify placing the Akathistos among the works of Romanos, but on the other hand it cannot be affirmed that the Akathistos is not by Romanos.

[7] In Christ and Paranikas (1871), 61.

[8] Τῇ ὑπερμαχῷ στρατηγῷ is found in all codices, cf. Trypanis (1968), 29.

[9] Found only in one codex, cf. Trypanis (1968), 29; Maas (1905), 645.

[10] Krypiakiewicz (1909), 361–3. Cf. Beck (1959), 427; Wellesz (1962), 196; Trypanis (1968), 20.

[11] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 34 (translated): "It is very possible that the poem which does not include the unique and invariable refrain as is the rule of the other kontakia, did not have a prooimion from the beginning, because we believe that its existence is linked to the necessary indication of the refrain before the beginning of the series of oikoi."

[12] Trypanis (1971), 374–89. The Akathistos edition was published in 1968 in *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*.

[13] I suppose that the prooemium was written during the sixth-century Nestorian controversy. The theological schism which contributed to the emergence of the hymn originally must then have been known. The Christological argument of the prooemium ("is contained unchanged but whole in you") refers to the immutability of the godhead in the Incarnation, a theme which in the controversy over the Theotokos had formed the greatest problem between Nestorius's and Cyril of Alexandria's conceptions.

[14] Limberis made this error in her dissertation (1987).

leads chiefly into the theme of the Annunciation.[15] This prooemium I dismiss.

The hymn is an account of the Incarnation of God the Logos, which signifies the redemption of humankind which takes place through the Virgin. The purpose of the hymn is to praise Mary for her part in the Incarnation. The two themes, the Incarnation and the praise to Mary, make up the structure of the hymn.[16] The opening portion (strophes 1–12) depicts the Incarnation as a historical series of events, using the Gospels and one apocryphal text as basis, whilst the concluding portion (strophes 13–24) emphasizes the significance of the Incarnation in the history of salvation. In referring to the content of the hymn the opening part is often described as 'historical' and the concluding part as 'theological'.[17] Such a division is not in fact apt, since the opening portion is as theological as the conclusion. Indeed, it is in the opening portion that the theological testimonies are presented which show the subject of discussion to be God's appearance on earth. Even if the hymn is an account of the Incarnation, however, the chief character is not Christ, but Mary. She is found in a central position in altogether sixteen strophes (Pr., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24), one half of the hymn consists of salutations to her, and twice the Lord himself is told to teach all the salutations to her (19.5 and 23.5). The refrain "Hail, bride unwedded" (χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε) is repeated twelve times, and the last strophe, a strongly impressive petition with alleluia, is addressed to her.

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[15] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 33.

[16] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 34. In two studies the double theme of the hymn is understood to reflect the Christological formulation of the Council of Chalcedon and the structure of the hymn is explained by it. Toniolo (1989), 265–83, draws his conclusion from the numerical symbolism, and first of all from the number two, which is "the primary and structural number of the whole Akathistos" (271). Vereecken (1993), 357–87, maintains again that the odd strophes represent the human nature of Christ and the even ones the divine nature (364–6). This construct does not correspond with the expressions of the nature of Christ found in the hymn, not even in the instances Vereecken presents, e.g. 5.1 "bearing God in her womb" (θεοδόχον ... τὴν μήτραν) refers both to the divine and the human nature and 5.3 "the child" (τὸ βρέφος) refers to John the Baptist, not to Christ.

[17] E.g. Trypanis (1968), 18. An example of a more sophisticated interpretation from Toniolo (1989), 266 (translated): "The first part develops the theme on a historical basis, the second deals with it on a dogmatic basis. The two levels exist side by side, the one derived from the story narrated by the Gospels, the other from the faith propounded by the Church. In both parts there is a double perspective, intertwined and complementary: the Christological and the ecclesiastical."

Above all, Mary bears witness to the mystery that God is born of a virgin. No less than ten strophes affirm this (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19).[18] The moment and manner of conception is depicted in strophes 4 and 15. The hymn deals however with a much wider subject area than the Annunciation, as a summary of the content shows:

1 The angel announced the birth of the Lord to the Theotokos.
2 Mary was amazed at the seedless childbirth.
3 The angel answered by introducing her as an initiate (μύστις) of the divine plan.
4 The power of the Most High overshadowed her.
5 Mary, bearing God in her womb, visited Elizabeth, whose unborn child recognized her as the Bearer of God.
6 Joseph's doubts about Mary's purity disappeared when he learned that the conception was from the Holy Spirit.
7 The shepherds heard angels glorify Christ's coming and ran to their Shepherd.
8 The Magi, following the radiance of the star, found the mighty King and attained the unattainable.
9 The Chaldaeans saw in the arms of the Virgin him who fashioned humankind. In spite of his servile form they perceived him to be their master, and presented their gifts.
10 The Magi returned to Babylon as heralds, proclaiming Christ to all.
11 The idols of Egypt fell because of the light of the Saviour's truth.
12 Simeon saw the perfect God in the infant he received in his arms.
13 A new creation manifests the miracle that the Creator himself was born from the seedless womb.
14 The strange birth is a call to us to salvation, for which purpose the High One appeared on earth as a humble man.
15 The uncircumscribed Word became human. He was born of the Virgin, who is greeted as the container of the uncontainable God.
16 All the ranks of angels marvelled at the Incarnation, seeing the unapproachable God as a human approachable by all.
17 Wordy orators are seen to be like dumb fishes, because they could not explain the mystery of the virgin birth.

[18] Explicitly in 13.3–5: "From the seedless womb he came, preserving it chaste as it was before, so that, beholding the miracle . . ." and 17.1–5: "Wordy orators . . . are at a loss to say how you remained virgin and yet had power to bear a child, but we, marvelling at the mystery . . .".

18 God, the Maker of all things, our shepherd, appeared for our sake as a human like us, calling like by means of like.
19 The Virgin is a wall to virgins and all seeking her protection, as the Maker of heaven and earth formed her by dwelling in her womb.
20 No hymn can recount the multitude of the many mercies of the holy King.
21 The holy Virgin is seen as a torch full of light shining upon those in darkness. By kindling the immaterial light she guides all to divine knowledge.
22 The redeemer tore up the record of sins, wishing to grant release from ancient debts.
23 We praise the Theotokos as a living temple, because the Lord made his dwelling in her womb and taught us to venerate her.
24 A prayer to her who gave birth to the Word to deliver us from every ill and the punishment to come.

The subject of the strophes' contents does not reveal the ideological structure of the hymn, by means of which alone an understanding and interpretation of the whole becomes possible. A different sort of scheme for the content of the strophes is necessary: it is obvious that the Incarnation and its significance is depicted in the Akathistos following the early Christian pattern of thought typical of the Greek tradition, whereby the Incarnation signifies redemption from the Fall and its consequent effects, and is a sign of Christ's second coming at the end of time. Here Mary is conceived as the second Eve, by whose obedience the 'correction process' of the Fall is put into effect. At the same time she is seen as that Virgin foretold by prophecy from whom God is born. All this is as it were background information, a starting point self-evident to the hymn writer, which needs no further explanation. The real 'novelty' the hymnographer now presents relates to the dogma of the Theotokos.

1–4 Mary as the antitype of Eve or the second Eve
1–12 The testimonies that the one who was born was the prophesied God
13–17 *The mystery of the Incarnation:*
13 A new creation
14 A strange birth
15 The manner of the Incarnation and the nature of Christ
16 The marvellous work
17 The virgin birth
18 The aim of the Incarnation: salvation

19–22 *The factors of salvation:*
19 Virginity
20 The sacrifice of Christ
21 Baptism, eucharist
22 Redemption as an act of the tearing up of the record of sins
23 The proclamation of Mary as the Theotokos
24 The eschatological perspective of the Incarnation.

The Salutations

The theme dealt with in the opening of a strophe determines the content of the salutations. There are 144 χαῖρε salutations in the hymn, in series of twelve phrases in the twelve odd strophes. These series of salutations are unique in hymn writings. The literary genre of salutations (χαιρετισμοί), which Trypanis points to, is a phenomenon which appears not to have been researched fundamentally.[19] Wellesz expresses the opinion that two poetical genres are blended together in the Akathistos, the kontakion and the salutations.[20] He argues that the salutations "can be traced back to the liturgy of the Hellenic Synagogues" and supposes that their prototype dates from the time of the Council of Ephesus.[21] The notion that the salutations specifically of the Akathistos are originally from Hellenic synagogues is rather too far-fetched. But the supposition that their prototype may be from the time of the Council of Ephesus is defensible, since salutations appear, even in series, in homilies produced in the context of Ephesus.[22] The existence of

[19] Trypanis (1968), 25 n. 58. The bibliography Trypanis refers to is quite insufficient for explaining the origins and development of the genre, and for instance Filonov Gove (1988), 11–12, still refers to Maas's article "Das Kontakion" from 1910, which, however, does not at all treat the question of the χαιρετισμοί. An attempt to explain the origins of the genre is Montagna (1962). Cf. an illuminating article of Baumstark (1954).

[20] Wellesz (1957), xx.

[21] Wellesz (1962), 309.

[22] Cf. the table in Caro (1971–3), 686. Homilies: Caro 20 = Hesychius II, *PG* 93.1460D–1461B, a list of epithets, the Annunciation scene; Caro 23 = Pseudo-Theodotus 'A', *PG* 77.1393AB, a hymn with a set of salutations (5 χαῖρε, 12 χαίροις), cf. Meersseman (1958), 12–14; Caro 27 = Procl.CP I, *PG* 65.680A–681AB, a set of epithets; Caro 30 = Cyril III, Hom. 4, *PG* 77.992AC, an encomium to Mary (2 χαίροις), see below "The Ephesian Context"; Caro 37 = Pseudo-Chrysostom IV = Procl.CP (Leroy 1967: 269–70), *PG* 61.373, a set of salutations (18 χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη); Caro 38 = 'Basil of Seleucia', *PG* 85.444A–B, the Annunciation scene (4 χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη); Caro 39 =

a link between the salutations and the Council of Ephesus was emphasized already by G. G. Meersseman,[23] but it needs noting no further than that the model of the salutations is from that period. D. M. Montagna does not exclude the possibility that the salutations of the Akathistos may be later additions.[24] In the section on "The Veneration of Mary" I shall offer my explanation for the emergence of the salutations of the Akathistos.

Trypanis focuses attention upon the salutations only on account of the rhyme, which he views as influenced by Syriac hymnography.[25] But there is no need to have recourse to Syrian influence to explain the appearance of rhyme in them. As E. Norden has pointed out, rhyme is the same as the 'homoeoteleuton' (ὁμοιοτέλευτον) of ancient rhetoric.[26] The origin of schematic rhyme is likely to lie in parallelism,[27] which is at its peak in the Akathistos, in which the salutations are characterized by the type called 'paromoeosis' in classical rhetoric.[28] It is a question of just such a phenomenon in the salutations of the Akathistos.[29] Moreover

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Chrysippus of Jerusalem, *PO* 19.336–7 (218–19), an encomium to Mary (15 χαῖρε), thereafter Chrysippus's statement that homilists salute Mary with epithets. Cf. Fletcher (1958), 62.

[23] Meersseman (1958), 20, notes that salutations were in use among the Greeks at the time of the Council of Ephesus, being much used by Theodotus of Ancyra, and that the theological and poetical expressions of the Akathistos could derive from this period. The salutations were popular in hymnography until the end of the Middle Ages (ibid. 14).

[24] Montagna (1962), 499–500, thinks that the original stanzas would have ended with a simple ephymnos (ἐφύμνιος) e.g. χαῖρε, ἡ κεχαριτωμένη.

[25] Trypanis stresses that the kontakion "On Judas" of Romanos (Maas and Trypanis 1963, no. 17) and the long verses (the salutations) of the Akathistos share a common technique in the use of rhyme (Trypanis 1968: 21–2: "Both internal rhyme and rhyme indicating the end of lines of equal length are used"). He considers this significant, "for with these two exceptions the deliberate use of rhyme is never found in early Byzantine religious or non-religious poems" (1968: 22 n. 40 with a reference to Meyer's article in *Abh. d. philos.-philol. Klasse d. K. Bayerischen Akad. d. Wiss.* xvii (1885); cf. Trypanis in Maas and Trypanis 1963: xiv n. 3). He concludes (1968), 25, that "the isolated use of rhyme in Greek at so early a date . . . probably points to a Hellenized writer from the East, where rhyme was frequently used in Christian Syriac poetry". Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 19–20, observes, however, that rhyme is rare in Syriac poetry before Arabic times, and even in Ephrem's work, where it is more frequent, remains a secondary element.

[26] Norden (1958), 847, 861.

[27] Norden (1958), 813–24.

[28] Cf. Filonov Gove (1988), 29.

[29] Contra Trypanis: "In both long and short strophes we find the deliberate use of rhyme. This is to be distinguished from the *homoioteleuton* of rhetoric so often present in Byzantine poetry; for the metrical structure of the long strophes, which includes several

there appears in the Akathistos a characteristic feature of the rhetoric of festal sermons, in which rhyme or homoeoteleuton was reserved for places of the highest pathos.[30] In the Akathistos it is found in the salutations: the repetition and the intensity of the ever new epithets give rise to the highest pathos.[31]

It is true that the salutations differ from the body of the hymn metrically, but on the other hand they form a logical connection with the preceding narrative.[32] The most striking difference between the main text and the salutations, however, lies in the parallelism, which is the driving principle of the structure of the salutation phrases: every series of twelve phrases is arranged in six pairs of parallel lines. In her investigation, *The Slavic Akathistos Hymn: Poetic Elements of the Byzantine Text and the Old Church Slavonic Translation*, Antonia Filonov Gove has analysed in detail only the first strophe, but even that gives a good impression of the Akathistos Hymn's remarkable parallelism. The metrical parallelism is obligatory, but there are also innumerable instances of semantic, phonological and grammatical parallelism and combinations of these.[33] The two initial lines of salutations call upon almost all the resources of the genre, and display the greatest use possible of parallelism.[34] Hence the Akathistos is considered a masterpiece of rhetoric,[35] and a detailed description of the hymn's rhetorical structure would therefore hold an interest of its own, but it is outside the scope of this investigation. Furthermore it is noticeable that in most cases the pairs of parallel verses belong together conceptually. But because the content of the two verses which belong together is almost without exception different, the salutations hold a re-

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pairs of lines of equal length, seems to have been specially devised for the use of rhyme" (Maas and Trypanis 1963: 17).

[30] Norden (1958), 847–8.

[31] Cf. Kustas (1973), 54–5; Filonov Gove (1988), 42–3.

[32] E.g. Maas (1905), 644, observes that the salutations often have a subtle connection with the preceding narrative, not necessarily obvious at first glance; cf. A. Filonov Gove (1988), 12.

[33] Filonov Gove (1988), 22–6, 29–41 and *passim*. Cf. Mitsakis (1979) and Xydes (1978), 178–84 and *passim*.

[34] Filonov Gove (1988), 34. E.g. lines 1.6–7 χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἡ χαρὰ ἐκλάμψει· χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἡ ἀρὰ ἐκλείψει ("Hail, through whom joy shall shine forth; Hail, through whom the curse shall cease") contain an anaphora (repetition of χαῖρε, δι' ἧς), two homoeoteleuta (χαρά/ἀρά ἐκλάμψει/ἐκλείψει), two cases of paronomasia (χαρά/ἀρά: ἐκλάμψει/ἐκλείψει) and an anaphoric paregmenon (ἐκλάμψει/ἐκλείψει). In addition, the lines display semantic parallelism in the form of antithesis.

[35] Trypanis (1968), 25. Cf. the differing opinion of Tomadakis (1962), cols. 1152, 1155.

markably great deal of information about Mary. For this reason each salutation needs separate investigation.

A great part of the salutation verses consists of figures of speech which in classical rhetoric formed one type of the tropes, the metaphor. Metaphor was then understood primarily as a linguistic adornment. In Byzantine rhetoric metaphor was considered especially appropriate for the declaration of divine truths.[36] Among the metaphors of the Akathistos there are some generally known figures of speech, the so called 'types' (τύποι) or Old Testament prefigurations of Mary.[37] Since types are to be understood as prefigurements ordained by God himself,[38] their meaning has been born out of the tradition of interpretation. In any case they cannot be considered decorations. In the Akathistos the use of metaphor and the interplay of rhetorical devices is strikingly rich. Such an aesthetic approach as the salutations represent has become foreign to us and may raise the suspicion whether that over-decorative language is also ornamental in its content, without cognitive or intellectual significance. Also Trypanis's statement, "the profuse and rhetorical praise of the Virgin occasionally reaches a pitch of studied exuberance",[39] implies that the poet has widened and developed excessively something in which there is not very much concrete content. Whether in the salutations there is a vain jangling of words cannot be resolved without an analysis. But we may certainly assess the logic of the meaning contained in the figures of speech even in the present day, if we make use even partially of those criteria which made the praise of Mary correct then. The analysis will show that in the truth proclaimed in figurative language the most beautiful order (κόσμος) holds sway in place of chaos.

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[36] Cf. Kustas (1973), 57, 75, 149.

[37] E.g. chair of the king, celestial ladder, tabernacle of God and the Word, ark, gilded by the Spirit.

[38] Cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, s.v. "Typos".

[39] Trypanis (1968), 25.

CHAPTER THREE

STATE OF THE RESEARCH

The Akathistos Hymn is assigned to the genre of the kontakion,[1] a type of hymn which is considered as "the one and only great original achievement of Byzantine literature".[2] What then is a kontakion? Paul Maas's still topical article from 1910, "Das Kontakion", answers the question briefly,[3] and (for example) K. Mitsakis's *Byzantine Hymnography* does so at length in over 300 pages.[4] The word 'kontakion' (κοντάκιον) is itself anachronistic.[5] Trypanis describes the kontakion as follows.

> The kontakion is a sermon in verse accompanied by music. In character it is similar to the early Byzantine festival sermons in prose, though metre and music must have greatly heightened the effect. The form generally consists of 18–24 metrically identical stanzas (called οἶκοι) preceded by a short prelude (called κουκούλιον) in another metre. The first letters of the stanzas form an acrostic, which frequently includes the name of the poet. The last line of the prelude introduces a refrain, with which all the following stanzas end.[6]

The form of the kontakion is explained by reference to Syriac religious poetry. The kontakion may be the product of a union of three types of poem, *memra*, *madrasha* and *sugitha*,[7] which Greek-speaking writers devel-

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[1] *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, s.v. "Akathistos-Hymnos"; *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, s.v. "Akathistos Hymn"; *Marienlexikon*, s.v. "Akathistos".

[2] Trypanis in his Introduction to Maas and Trypanis (1963), xiv.

[3] The article on which Brock comments (1992b: 81): "Indeed, all that Maas had to say in an article of 1910 on the subject of the origins of the *kontakion* still stands today."

[4] Mitsakis (1971b), 171–353, 357–524.

[5] The etymology of the word κοντάκιον is not clear. Probably it refers to the stick around which a parchment with a liturgical text was rolled. The word does not appear before the codex was introduced, cf. Koder (1996), 9–10; Maas (1910), 285; Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 37. In the acrostica are found the words which the Byzantine hymnographers themselves used: ὕμνος, ἔπος, ποίημα, ᾠδή, ψαλμός, αἶνος, δέησις etc.

[6] Maas and Trypanis (1963), xi.

[7] Maas (1910), 290 (translated): "The Memra is a metrical sermon distinguished from the kontakion on the basis of its metrical simplicity and lack of acrostic and refrain. In the Madrasha the refrain is obligatory, and acrostic frequent, and there are complex strophic rules; but the epic motive is lacking. The Sugitha is a responsory song with obligatory acrostic, in which amongst other things biblical episodes are represented in thr form of dialogues."

oped into a metrically perfect and varied form.[8] On the other hand the birth of the kontakion was influenced decisively by the fourth- and fifth-century festal sermons in Greek, poetical homilies which have been used as sources. The overall picture of the relationship of the homily and the kontakion is obscure, since an extremely small quantity of Greek Church poetry is preserved from the fifth century.[9] Nonetheless the relationship is clear in terms of influence.[10] The kontakion arose at the end of the fifth century, but how it arose is not known exactly.[11] The *floruit* of the genre is better known, as it corresponds with the poetry of Romanos, to whom the oldest datable kontakia are ascribed.[12] It is understandable that the name and style of Romanos dominate kontakion poetry, since the majority of other kontakion poets remain anonymous.[13]

Research on the Akathistos is characterized by its progressing hand in hand with research on Romanos.[14] So it has been from the start. Whether the Akathistos is by Romanos or not is a question every Akathistos researcher has had to face. Who then was Romanos? He was born in Syria in the last quarter of the fifth century and died in Constantinople before the end of 562. Romanos is the best known name in the field of kontakion poetry, and the title of honour 'Melodos' speaks of the esteem in which he is held. Of the works of Romanos around sixty which are considered genuine are preserved. These establish his period of activity as the reign of Justinian I (527–65), and his works are seen to reflect the ecclesiastical politics of the Justinianic period.[15]

The specialists on Romanos whose influence on Akathistos research has been greatest are Paul Maas and his pupil C. A. Trypanis. Maas's influence on Akathistos research in general stems from his article 'Das

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[8] Maas and Trypanis (1963), xiii.

[9] Maas (1910), 294; cf. Mitsakis (1971a), 45–6.

[10] E.g. Maas (1910), 298–306. Mitsakis (1971a), 49: "If one wanted to draw a short historical diagram of the origins and evolution of the kontakion, one should start with the poetic sermons of the Greek Church Fathers of the second century (Melito of Sardis) and then follow their tradition up till the end of the fifth century (Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople, Basil, Bishop of Seleucia), that is till the actual appearance of the early kontakia."

[11] Cf. Maas (1910), 289; Brock (1992b), 81; Mitsakis (1971a), 46–9.

[12] The years 537–55, cf. Maas and Trypanis (1963), xii. According to Koder (2001) the *terminus ante quem* 562 is possible.

[13] Trypanis (1968), 25.

[14] E.g. Mitsakis (1971b), 483–509; Tomadakis (1965), 153–72. Basic bibliography on Romanos: Carpenter (1970), xxvii–xxxviii; Grosdidier de Matons (1977), xv–xix.

[15] Koder (1996), 7–14.

Kontakion',[16] and his influence on ideas about the relationship between the Akathistos and Romanos from two other writings. The first is a short critique of Placido de Meester's Akathistos research,[17] and the second is an article 'Die Chronologie der Hymnen des Romanos'.[18] In 1963 Maas and Trypanis together published the genuine kontakia of Romanos, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica Genuina.* This does not include the Akathistos. This decision was evidently made given the lack of evidence to fulfil the criteria of scientific objectivity.[19] Trypanis wrote in the introduction to the edition that the attribution of the Akathistos to Romanos by modern scholarship "by no means is a settled question".[20] But Maas supported the authorship of Romanos,[21] as did Trypanis. In 1968 Trypanis published an edition, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, which includes the Akathistos among other anonymous kontakia.[22] It is the only critical edition of the Akathistos. The introduction can be considered as an authoritative statement in Akathistos research. In it Trypanis states: "The attribution to Romanos is certainly possible, and even probable."[23]

Trypanis's arguments for Romanos can be divided into two parts. The first deals with the form of the Akathistos and the genre of the kontakion, the second with the theological content of the hymn. He does not analyse the style of the Akathistos, but expresses his opinion of its literary worth. I first cite, from the conclusion, Trypanis's reasoning over the dating, which is connected to the hymn's theological content:

> I am inclined to agree with the scholars who attribute it (with the exception of prooemium II) to the days of Justinian I. So fully finished a *kontakion* can hardly belong to an earlier period in the development of this literary genre, even though the insistence on the Virgin as the Mother of God (ἡ θεοτόκος) and the triumphant expression of this suggests a date closer to the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.) The Christological issue of the Incarnation also (prooemium I, 3^1–7 and strophe O 1^1–6) points to the 6th century, for theological issues do not appear in Byzantine religious poetry

[16] Maas (1910).
[17] Maas (1905).
[18] Maas (1906).
[19] Trypanis (1968), 25 n. 54: "No name is included in the acrostic of the poem, and no reference to any specific author is found in manuscripts before the 13th century", but he leaves unsaid that the form of the Akathistos does not correspond to his description of the kontakion, cf. Maas and Trypanis (1963), xi.
[20] Maas and Trypanis (1963), xviii.
[21] Maas (1912), 300.
[22] Trypanis (1968), 17–39.
[23] Trypanis (1968), 25.

> before the days of Justinian I. However, if the canticum was written, as seem likely, for the common festival of the Annunciation and the Nativity, this precludes a date after *c.* 530–550, when the Εὐαγγελισμός was established on March 25 as an independent feast.[24]

Justinian I ruled from 527 to 565, but he already enjoyed the powers of ruler under his uncle the emperor Justin I (518–27). Within "the days of Justinian" may therefore be counted a time before the establishment of the Annunciation feast. As regards the authorship of Romanos this means that the *terminus ante quem* would be around 530. But the most famous work by Romanos, Ἡ παρθένος σήμερον,[25] according to legend his first, was written only when the Nativity and Annunciation were already celebrated separately.[26] No great value has been afforded the legend in investigations, but herein lies a problem of credibility which undermines the authorship of Romanos.

It is to be noticed that Trypanis believes that "insistence on the Virgin as the Theotokos" and "the triumphant expressions" may point to a time a century earlier. He rejects this hypothesis, however, with the argument that the hymn's form represents "so fully finished a *kontakion*". It is clear that since the connection with Ephesus appears possible, this connection must be investigated before it can be rejected on the basis of the argument about the form. In other words the problem is the hymn's Christology, an argument as weighty from the point of view of the dating as that which relates to the form.

Trypanis claims that the Christological issue of the Incarnation points to the sixth century, "for theological issues do not appear in Byzantine religious poetry before the days of Justinian I". This argument does not bear criticism. The claim that theological issues do not appear before the days of Justinian is incredible. Hymnography was a weapon used in doctrinal disputes probably already in early Christian hymnography.[27] Concerning the troparia, the earliest liturgical poetry, which was directed against heresies, H. G. Beck states: "It also easily becomes clear from this counter-propaganda that these small songs are not so much an expression of religious feeling as of a precise dogmatic teaching."[28] And Theodore the Lector, recording the events of the Council of Chalcedon

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[24] Trypanis (1968), 24–5.
[25] "On the Nativity I", Maas and Trypanis (1963), no. 1.
[26] Cf. Mitsakis (1971b), 489.
[27] Mitsakis (1971a), 33.
[28] Beck (1959), 263.

of 451, even names two hymnographers, who must have dealt with the issue of the Incarnation: "Those who approved the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon gathered around Anthimus . . . those who opposed it were associated with Timocles."[29] Moreover in Trypanis's *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* there is an anonymous work "On the Virgin Mary", which he himself considers, particularly on account of its theological arguments, to be close to the Council of Ephesus.[30]

Furthermore, Trypanis examines only superficially the central fifteenth strophe of the Akathistos, which depicts the Incarnation and nature of Christ. He admits, on the basis of a source employed,[31] that it "could suggest an attack against the teachings of Nestorius", i.e. it could point to the fifth century. The fact that in the genuine cantica of Romanos rejections of Nestorianism are encountered[32] does not of course constitute a proof that the Akathistos is from the time of Romanos—nor does Trypanis claim this—but he does claim that before Romanos theological issues were not dealt with in religious poetry. He corroborates his claim by alluding to Maas's article 'Die Chronologie der Hymnen des Romanos',[33] from which it does not emerge what happened before Romanos. There again, if Trypanis is referring to the type of polemical style[34] which had not previously appeared, it is to be noted that we do not know if it had appeared or not. Moreover, the Akathistos is Christologically affirmative, not polemical in the way of Romanos.

It is evident that under Maas's guidance the theological interpretation of strophe 15 has been contextualized to the time of Justinian. Maas twice focuses attention on a parallel between some lines of strophe 15 of the Akathistos and the kontakion "On Pentecost": "for the condescension did not take place as a descent nor did he experience a diminution; for he was above and he was below".[35] The best known researcher on the Akathistos, the musicologist Egon Wellesz, also drew an inference in support of the authorship of Romanos on the basis of the citation from

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[29] *PG* 86.176: ὅσοι μὲν ἔχαιρεν τῇ ἐν Χαλκήδονι συνόδῳ παρὰ τῷ Ἀνθίμῳ συνήρχοντο . . . ὅσοι δὲ ταύτης ἐχθροὶ τῷ Τιμοκλεῖ προσέκειντο. Translation Mitsakis (1971a), 43.

[30] Trypanis (1968), 159.

[31] Trypanis (1968), 22. Hom. 39, spuriously attributed to Basil of Seleucia, *PG* 85.448. My opinion differs from Trypanis's.

[32] Maas (1906), 14.

[33] Maas (1906).

[34] Maas (1906), 12–24, esp. 14 against Nestorians.

[35] Maas (1905), 644–5 and (1906), 19; Maas and Trypanis (1963), no. 33, str. 7.4–5: οὐ γὰρ γέγονε μετάβασις ἡ συγκατάβασις οὐδ' ὑπέμεινε μείωσιν· ἄνω γὰρ ἦν καὶ κάτω ἦν.

"On Pentecost" and strophe 15 of the Akathistos. He viewed Maas's article 'Die Chronologie' as supporting his idea: "The resemblance of the lines to those of the Akathistos is unmistakable and suggests Romanos as author of the hymn."[36]

P. F. Krypiakiewicz, whose article "De Hymni Acathisti Auctore" from the year 1909 has strongly influenced ideas about the theological content of the Akathistos,[37] regarded Romanos as the author on the basis of the above mentioned Pentecost passage and a few textual coincidences between Akathistos Prooemium I and strophe 15 and some of the hymns of Romanos.[38] Krypiakiewicz's thesis is that Romanos's anti-Apollinarian propaganda appears in the Akathistos. But Krypiakiewicz did not date the Akathistos to the time of Justinian. He believed that Romanos had composed the Akathistos whilst still in Syria.[39]

On the basis of "On Pentecost" Mitsakis also claims in his work *Byzantine Hymnography* (1971) that the Christology of the Akathistos and of Romanos is the same. Mitsakis holds that this indicates that the poet of the Akathistos, like Romanos, was concerned with the problems of Justinian's period and complied with the Church politics of the imperial theologians, which is evident precisely in the anti-Apollinarian expressions.[40] However, Grosdidier de Matons, a Romanos specialist, put the whole question in a new light in 1977: "The dogmatic teaching on the Incarnation in Romanos does not have sufficient originality to enable us to detect his hand in the Akathistos."[41] Thereafter in 1993 J. Vereecken, who supports the authorship of Romanos,[42] repeated Krypiakiewicz (the strophe is anti-Apollinarian),[43] but at the same time relied upon Grosdidier de Matons in seeing in it antimonophysite Christological viewpoints of the period of Romanos.[44]

Based on Grosdidier de Matons's specialist knowledge it may be claimed that strophe 15 of the Akathistos does not justify the supposition that the Christologies of Romanos and of the Akathistos are congruent.

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36 Wellesz (1956), 148.

37 E.g. Mitsakis (1971b), 493, who relying on Krypiakiewicz postulates that the dogmatic teaching of the hymn, especially on the Incarnation, appears to be Romanos's.

38 Krypiakiewicz (1909), 372–3.

39 Krypiakiewicz (1909), 380.

40 Mitsakis (1971b), 502.

41 Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 36, 265–70 (translated).

42 Vereecken (1993), 387.

43 Vereecken (1993), 346.

44 Vereecken (1993), 366.

Moreover, as far as the Akathistos is concerned, five lines are insufficient for determining the theological content of a hymn of 288 lines. Nor does Romanos as a 'theologian' justify assumptions which reach too far in this matter.[45] In the opinion of Grosdidier de Matons the relationship of Romanos to the Akathistos was that he knew it and borrowed from it, as well as using the same sources, above all Basil of Seleucia.[46] Johannes Koder shows, in a forthcoming article, that the Christological terminology of Romanos bears the stamp of the formula of Chalcedon,[47] whereas I will demonstrate that the Akathistos lacks this terminology; in the light of the resolutions of the Church councils in which the nature of Christ was decided, i.e. Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451, Trypanis's argument for the date, based on the relationship between the Christologies of the Akathistos and of Romanos, disproves itself.

The matter of 'the literary quality' of the Akathistos cannot be sidelined in a discussion of authorship relating to Romanos, for it is often viewed as evidence in favour of Romanos. In particular if the Akathistos is considered the highest achievement of kontakion poetry, its composer would preferably be a kontakion poet *par excellence*,[48] although the desire is not an acceptable rational basis of theory. Such prejudicial supposition emerges in the positions of Akathistos researchers and directs them to see what they wish to see.[49] In support of the authorship of Romanos the notion formulated by Egon Wellesz is often cited:

> None of the homiletical writers, his forerunners, nor any of the contemporary hymnographers were equal to him in power of expression, poetical

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[45] Cf. Koder (2001); Carpenter (1970), xxviii. Cf. the differing view of Martzelos (1991), 114.

[46] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 36.

[47] Koder (2001).

[48] Maas and Trypanis (1963), xiv; Trypanis (1968), 25; Maas's critique (1912) on Papageorgiou.

[49] E.g. Mitsakis (1971b), 499, expresses it explicitly (translated): "It presents practical difficulties for us to accept that such a great poet wrote only one hymn and fell silent, and it is likewise difficult for us to resist the temptation to identify him with the most significant personage of his times, Romanos." Mitsakis contradicts himself by suggesting that Romanos had composed the Akathistos when still in Syria (i.e. before he went to Constantinople during the reign of Anastasius I, 491–518): the Christology of the hymn could not then reflect the ecclesiastical politics of Justinian as Mitsakis also maintains. Marjorie Carpenter again in adding the Akathistos to her kontakia edition does not rely on her own observations (1973: viii): "This poem far outshines the three Mary hymns in *Kontakia*. . . . If Romanos was the poet responsible for the Akathistos—as I rather think he was—then these three poems are pale reflections of his inspired hymn, or else he was working up to it as climax."

> vision, boldness of similes, and perfect harmony of line; and in no other hymn does his greatness shine more brightly than in the Akathistos.[50]

Wellesz's argument reveals itself as mere subjective judgement. First, the homiletic writings are of a different genre, incongruent with hymnography, since the artistic expectations are different. Second, since works other than those of Romanos are not preserved, the claim is not founded on sufficient representative comparative material. Trypanis's description of the literary value of the Akathistos is more moderate:

> The Akathistos Hymn is rightly considered the greatest achievement in Byzantine religious poetry. Like most early Byzantine *kontakia* it draws on scripture and on a number of older prose sermons, yet it remains a remarkably fresh and in many ways original work. With a striking boldness of similes the poet succeeds in blending the overwhelming mystery of the Incarnation of the Word with the softer cult of the Virgin, and the varied and intricate rhythms employed are enhanced by the music of the words. We may also say that in the Akathistos the literary genre of the χαιρετισμοί has attained its highest point, even if the profuse and rhetorical praise of the Virgin occasionally reaches a pitch of studied exuberance.[51]

But it is to be stressed that the literary value of the Akathistos cannot be an argument in support of Romanos. On the other hand the literary style can be, although the poet may of course change his style and develop. In the case of Romanos, exaggerating a little Trypanis's thought the hypothesis would be: if Romanos is the author, he would have composed the Akathistos in the early stage of his creative period before finding 'his own style' as a creator of dramatic hymns.

Let us take an example: in the Akathistos, according to Wellesz, the heterogeneous elements of poetry are "the dramatic in the description in the events and situations, and the lyrical in the panegyrics to the Virgin".[52] Thus, Wellesz sees there one kind of drama and claims that "the poet makes extensive use of direct speech in the dialogues".[53] But a true dialogue is to be found only in the Annunciation scene of strophes 2–3, for the salutations and the Alleluia-refrains are more responses to what has been told before than a part of a genuine dialogue. Grosdidier de Matons maintains that in the Akathistos the dialogue is "restricted and

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[50] Wellesz (1957), xxxiii; e.g. Carpenter (1973), 298; Mitsakis (1971b), 494; de Andrés Martínez (1981), 60.
[51] Trypanis (1968), 25.
[52] Wellesz (1962), 192.
[53] Wellesz (1962), 192.

still timorous".[54] And he is right: the difference is striking if we compare the Akathistos with the dialogues in the works of Romanos, i.e. conversations between personalities or characters in drama. But if we do not seek after such a model of dialogue, we might agree with Wellesz. These and other clear stylistic divergences may be explicable in terms of an earlier stage of development.[55] But how likely is it that such a development occurred? Mitsakis considers this matter when he compares Romanos's hymn "On the Annunciation" (I) with the Akathistos and comes to a dead end.[56] As we have insufficient information about Romanos, the supposition that the Akathistos may represent an early product of his is mere speculation.

All in all, leaving aside the separate question of the form of the kontakion, it becomes clear that there are no facts to support the authorship of Romanos. Seeing the Church politics of Justinian's time in the Akathistos on the basis that theological issues did not appear before his time in religious poetry is an untenable argument. The parallel passage in Romanos's hymn "On Pentecost" cannot indicate that the Christological issue of the Incarnation in the Akathistos points to a time a century later than when that issue was topical. On the contrary, the text of the Akathistos itself indicates something else, in Trypanis's words: "The insistence on the Virgin as the Mother of God and the triumphant expressions of this suggests a date closer to the Council of Ephesus."

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[54] Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 37 (translated).

[55] Three different examples of the stylistic divergences from the opponents of the Romanos authorship: Tomadakis (1965), 159 (translated): "The Akathistos has neither the dialogue nor the human characterization which distinguish the work of Romanos. The narrative spirit and technique are non-Romanos"; Høeg (1965), 22 (translated): "It is true that almost all modern specialists are in agreement in attributing the Akathistos to Romanos, and indeed one may invoke forceful arguments in favour of this hypothesis. The fact that the Akathistos belongs to a different genre from the kontakia is not an argument against. But it seems likely to me that many readers, despite the expatiations of the Pitras, the Maases and the Welleszes, are astonished not to find in this impressive poem either the moderation of stylistic ardour, or the rich and precise imagination, or the dramatic and firmly structured movement which characterize Romanos, the poet of kontakia"; Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 36 (translated): "We shall go so far as to say that during twenty years of intimate and assiduous partnership with Romanos we have never seemed to recognize his method in the fine and minute marquetry of the khairetismoi alternating with the recitation which soberly summarizes, somewhat in the way of an epyllion, the first chapters of Luke and Matthew. There is in the Akathistos some sort of distant reflection of hellenism which is a stranger to the art of Romanos."

[56] Mitsakis (1971b), 502–3 on Maas and Trypanis (1963), no. 36.

CHAPTER FOUR

A NEW APPROACH TO THE AKATHISTOS HYMN

Trypanis leans towards assigning the Akathistos to the period of Ephesus because of its obvious Marian character. An examination of the text of the hymn brings out three arguments in favour of the Ephesian theory:

(1) *The role of the Virgin.* Even though the main theme is the Incarnation, the totality proves that Christ is not the chief character, but the Virgin, the birth-giver (τεκοῦσα) of the Logos. She has the central position in sixteen strophes, and 144 verses i.e. a half of the hymn, consist of salutations to her. Twice the Lord himself is told to teach all to praise her (strophes 19 and 23). The petition of the last strophe is addressed to her. It is striking that the Virgin is presented as a concept without any implication of her personality. The central strophe (15) asserts the virgin birth (τόκος ἐκ παρθένου). In no less than twelve strophes the pure, unsullied virgin womb or its mystery is emphasized (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23); the Virgin is praised as the Theotokos, because the Lord made his dwelling in her womb (23.2).

(2) *Christology.* Even though the main theme is the Incarnation the hymn does not describe the nature of Christ with the emphasis of the Council of Chalcedon of 451, whose formulation runs briefly: in Christ the two natures (δύο φύσεις), divine and human, are united in one hypostasis (person) without confusion, change, division or separation (ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως).[1] Prooemium I, on the other hand, which is a theological summary of the hymn fashioned later, points explicitly to the unchangeability of the godhead of the Logos in the Incarnation—a subject which crystallized at the time of Ephesus, but which was not a contemporary concern at or after Chalcedon.

(3) *Salutations.* Even though the hymn's rhetoric, which in the salutations reaches its highest point,[2] gives the impression that the epithets of the Theotokos are to a great degree merely decorative literary expressions, a closer examination reveals that their meaning is essentially theological. The homilists of the Ephesian period similarly address the Theo-

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[1] See the *definitio fidei* in whole below, pp. 87–8.

[2] Trypanis (1968), 25.

tokos using metaphors, often with an easily recognizable biblical reference. Even though the Akathistos Hymn's series of salutations are unique in hymnography, salutations to Mary in themselves are not. Moreover, sets of salutations to Mary appear in homilies after the Council of Ephesus.[3]

I use these arguments as the basis for the theory that the time of Ephesus provides the context for the origin of the Akathistos. I will consider the matter in chronological sequence, so that a picture of that period emerges in its entirety.

The Ephesian Context

By the Ephesian context I mean the short period of history when various interests accumulated around the word 'Theotokos': Alexandrian and Antiochian theology, doctrine and popular piety, imperial and ecclesiastical politics.[4] It began in 428 when Nestorius as archbishop of Constantinople questioned the title 'Theotokos' attributed to Mary, on the ground that it leads to heresy. The visible stages in the theological development thereafter were the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus of 431, the *formula reunionis* of 433, the Second Council of Ephesus of 449 (the so-called 'Robber council') and the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451.[5]

In this chapter I will focus on the questions which, I think, are directly connected with the emergence and the contents of the Akathistos Hymn: the Theotokos controversy and the state of the veneration of Mary at the time of the Council of Ephesus. In the section on "Christology" I will examine in detail whether the Akathistos reflects the *definitio fidei* of Chalcedon as is normally maintained. In the section "Proclus of Constantinople as a Marian Preacher" I will show the relationship between the Akathistos and Proclus, the prominent Mariologist of that

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[3] Cf. Caro (1971–3), 684.

[4] Cf. McGuckin (1994), 21: "In the great conflict that was now to unfold, the issues cannot be reduced merely to the level of personality clashes, or even to the complex issue of the precedence of sees, or the involved political machinations of the imperial court . . . for what was about to clash was no less than two great schools of ecclesiastical reflection, piety, and discourse."

[5] I agree with Benko (1993), 256, who argues that it was not until the Council of Chalcedon that the term 'Theotokos' was firmly established, for the declaration of the Council of Ephesus did not mean that the Christological problem had been solved.

time. I also discuss Homily 39 attributed to Basil of Seleucia, because it has generally been taken as a source of the Akathistos.

Considering the subject matter, the image of Mary, the Ephesian context provides a favourable temporal frame. The Council of Ephesus is the first great council whose records[6] have survived (even if they cannot be considered as a neutral account, as the minutes of the Council of Chalcedon are),[7] and many studies treat that period from different angles. First of all, there is a work which is a useful starting-point as regards the homilies of the context of the Council of Ephesus: *La homiletica mariana griega en el siglo V* (1971–3), the fundamental Mariological work of Roberto Caro. Caro investigated altogether fifty-eight homilies systematically and arranged them chronologically on the basis of a content analysis and the manuscript tradition, taking textual criticism into consideration. Nineteen homilies of his collection, dated to the period of 428–49,[8] form a whole which could be characterized as a summary of the orthodox teaching on Mary on the way from Ephesus to Chalcedon.

Further, there is a study of social and religious history which seems to have become standard in treatments of the Council of Ephesus: *The Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (1982) by Kenneth G. Holum. It covers the events up to the year 455 and gives well-documented information of the circumstances, seen mainly from the angle of the Augusta Pulcheria (399–453), the elder sister of the emperor Theodosius II (401–50). According to Holum, Pulcheria, who "had devoted her virginity to Mary",[9] consciously built her dominion on the ideal of virginity and "brought Mary into her camp", when she increased her imperial power.[10] Holum introduces Pulcheria as the virtual winner of the controversy over the Theotokos.[11] This notion may

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[6] Edited in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (ed. Schwartz).

[7] The Ephesian Acts represent Cyril of Alexandria's view, cf. McGuckin (1994), 76; Meyendorff (1989), 168 ff.

[8] Caro (1971–3), 684. Homilies 20–38 in Caro's chronology.

[9] Sozomen, cited by Holum (1989), 93.

[10] Holum (1989), 93–6, 174. I do not totally agree with Holum. I admit that the virginity of Pulcheria was the factor which greatly benefited Pulcheria in her struggle for imperial power. However, Holum considers the normal ascetical behaviour of that epoch, the imitation of Mary, as the exceptional and excessive identification of Pulcheria with Mary, and gives a strange picture of Marian piety, e.g. "she [i.e. Pulcheria] embodied the fullness of Mary piety—in her womanhood, in her spectacular asceticism, and in her claims to Marial dignity", which makes his interpretation somewhat unbalanced. Cf. *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, s.v. "Pulcheria".

[11] Holum (1989), 170–4.

be correct at the level of popular piety and politics but it is not so at a doctrinal level.

For the winner of the controversy over the Theotokos was the "father of the Orthodox Christology *par excellence*",[12] Cyril of Alexandria (sed. 412–44), whom John A. McGuckin portrays in his study *St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (1994). McGuckin also presents the Christology of Nestorius whom he credits with beginning the controversy, which was to clarify the Christological presuppositions.[13] In Cyril's Christology the Alexandrian school of theology gained a victory over its ancient rival, the Antiochian school. According to McGuckin, it was the inadequacy of Nestorius's whole Christological scheme which motivated Cyril to compose his Christology,[14] whose influence lasts up to today. Therefore, presumably, if a hymn on the Incarnation of God the Logos praising the Theotokos for her share in salvation was written quite soon after Ephesus, its text should demonstrate not only an Alexandrian approach but a direct reference to the debate between Nestorius and Cyril. The analysis of the Christology of the Akathistos shows that there is such evidence.

One of the key figures in the Theotokos schism was Proclus. Very few historical facts of his life are to be found in the primary source, Socrates Scholasticus,[15] but his image as homilist is well known by virtue of the works of F. X. Bauer, B. Marx and F. J. Leroy.[16] Three recently produced studies complete the image; "Four Christological Homilies of Proclus of Constantinople: Introduction, Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary",[17] and the article "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh" by Nicholas Constas,[18] and *Proclus of Constantinople: A Popular Preacher in Fifth-Century Constantinople* by Jan H. Barkhuizen.[19] Proclus established himself as a major Constantinopolitan antagonist of Nestorius by delivering a homily against Nestorius's teaching in his presence.[20] The

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[12] McGuckin (1994), 1.
[13] McGuckin (1994), 23.
[14] McGuckin (1994), 174.
[15] *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII.28, 29, 35, 40–3, 45, 52.
[16] Bauer (1919). Marx (1940). Leroy (1967).
[17] Constas (1994).
[18] Constas (1995).
[19] Cunningham and Allen (1998), 179–200.
[20] *ACO* I.1.1.103–7. The title reads: Ὁμιλία Προκλοῦ ἐπισκόπου Κυζίκου λεχθεῖσα καθεζομένου Νεστορίου ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ("A homily of

succeeding generations know the name of Proclus on the basis of that homily which made the schism, long smouldering in ecclesiastical circles, a public affair. That homily, "the most famous sermon on the Virgin Mary in the ancient times",[21] was attached to the Acts of Ephesus within a year of the council, and its influence is traceable for centuries.[22] It is the first homily in the Proclian corpus of the edition of J. P. Migne, *De Laudibus Mariae*.[23] Proclus, who later was to become archbishop of Constantinople (sed. 434–46), was a prolific preacher; of his homiletic activity, which lasted more than thirty years, thirty-seven texts survived.[24] Seven of them are more or less of Marian character.[25]

McGuckin characterizes Proclus as "a loyal ally of Cyril's",[26] a claim which is founded on textual evidence and Proclus's activity. It is most likely that in the Theotokos controversy Proclus became an ally of the empress Pulcheria, whom he must have known already from the time when he acted as a secretary of Atticus of Constantinople (sed. 406–25), the spiritual teacher of the imperial family. The sources, however, do not mention the cooperation of Pulcheria and Proclus. Therefore Holum's account has to be taken as a hypothetical reconstruction.[27]

A synthesis of the research, which the above-mentioned works present, lays the foundation for my view that the hymn we know today under the title "Akathistos", but which actually is a hymn to the Virgin who gave birth to God the Logos, emerged from the pressure of that very period when theological concern was focused on Mary's role in the Incarnation, and the historical circumstances called for the confirmation of the victory at Ephesus.

Proclus, Bishop of Cyzicus, read while Nestorius was seated in the great church of Constantinople"). At that time Proclus was bishop of Cyzicus. Holum, McGuckin and Constas describe the occasion when Proclus preached, but only Holum (1989), 156, presents an interpretation of the introductory passage of the homily, which, according to him, never before had had "a complete explication". Cf. my differing explanation below.

21 Grillmeier (1975), 520.

22 *ACO* I.1.1.103–7. Cf. Constas (1994), 52.

23 *PG* 65.680–92; English translation: Wiles and Santer (1996), 61–6.

24 Barkhuizen (1998), 182.

25 Caro (1971–3), 76–128, cf. table (684).

26 McGuckin (1994), 117.

27 Cf. Holum (1989), 155–7. In this respect, the claims of Vasiliki Limberis (1994: 88, 112–13), whose view is based on Holum's work, concerning the relationship of Pulcheria to Proclus are quite fictitious.

The Theotokos Controversy

The Geek word 'Theotokos' (Θεοτόκος) means the 'Birth-giver of God'.[28] Because of its ambiguous Christological implications this word became a bone of contention between theologians. In the first place, it contradicts the conception of God's essence (οὐσία), which is ingenerate, self-existing and without beginning. Because the profession of faith of Nicaea in 325 states that Christ is of one essence with the Father,[29] there was the risk that the word 'Theotokos' would be understood in the sense that the uncreated, divine nature of Christ received its origin from Mary. The Theotokos controversy emerged from the demand for the correct, orthodox, interpretation of this word.

The Theotokos dispute[30] was a part of the Nestorian controversy,[31] itself part of the discourse on the person and natures of Christ, i.e. the Christological controversy,[32] which resulted in the *definitio fidei* of the Council of Chalcedon, proclaiming the dogma of the two natures and one hypostasis in Christ. The two great traditions of theology, the Alexandrian and Antiochian, did not confront each other before the contest over the title 'Theotokos' urged them to investigate the implications of the term 'Theotokos' for their Christologies.[33] Their presuppositions concerning the nature of Christ are referred to as the Alexandrian Logos–sarx Christology and the Antiochian Logos–anthropos Christology.[34] The Alexandrians started from the divine aspect of Christ's person, the *locus classicus* being John 1.14: "the Word became flesh" (ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο). Grillmeier declares that in the Cyrillian formulation, based on Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373),[35] it runs: "God the Logos did not come into a man, but he 'truly' became man, while

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[28] Cf. the history and explication of the term below.

[29] *ACO* II.1.2.127: ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί.

[30] Cf. "Theotokos" in McGuckin's index (1994); Constas (1994), 41–64; Holum (1989), 147–74.

[31] Grillmeier (1975), 447–87.

[32] Grillmeier (1975), 414–39; Kelly (1989), 280–343; Pelikan (1971), 226–77; Meyendorff (1975), 13–28.

[33] Sellers (1954). Cf. Grillmeier (1975), 414.

[34] Grillmeier (1975), 153–437. These two types of Christology are not always strictly accurate, but they have a certain practical convenience. More recent scholarship seems to be moving away from such categories.

[35] "The Word *became* man and *did not come into a man*", Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* III.30, *PG* 26.388A, cited by Grillmeier (1975), 417.

remaining God."[36] The Antiochian theology on the other hand drew its conclusions from the human nature and experience of Christ. Its *locus classicus* is Philippians 2.5–7: "Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness."[37]

The discourse on the doctrine of the Incarnation (ἐνανθρώπησις, σάρκωσις) is involved with the discourse on the natures and person of Christ. The First Ecumenical Council of 318 Fathers, assembled in Nicaea in 325, asserted that the Son of God "came down, and became incarnate, became human" (κατελθόντα, καὶ σαρκωθέντα, ἐνανθρωπήσαντα),[38] and at the same time that the incarnate Son is *homoousios* with the Father—the dogma which the council declared against the Arians[39]—which again opened a new problem: how to explain the divinity and humanity in Christ's person. The model of Apollinarius of Laodicaea (d. *c.* 390), an exponent of the Alexandrian tradition, was an attempt to work out a complete theory of Christ's person.[40] The first Council of Constantinople of 381 condemned the Christology of Apollinarius. In the Theotokos controversy the teachings of Apollinarius were tightly connected with the matter at hand for Cyril was continuously charged by his Antiochian opponents with Apollinarianism.[41] This was a characteristic feature of the Nestorian controversy. In the section "Christology" I will show its relevance to the Akathistos.

Originally in the Theotokos schism two different issues were intertwined. The one concerned the honorary title of Mary, the 'Theotokos', used in Marian devotions, and the other was involved with the term 'Theotokos' in reference to the nature of Christ. Presumably the title 'Theotokos' had belonged for several decades to the traditional language of Constantinopolitan Marian devotion before Nestorius questioned its

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36 Cyril, "Oratio ad Dominas" 31, *PG* 76.1228C, cited by Grillmeier (1975), 477.

37 Cf. Sellers (1954), 145 ff.

38 The creed is included in the Acts of Ephesus, *ACO* I.1.2.12.

39 The heresy of Arius denies the divine nature of Christ. Cf. Kelly (1989), 226–31; Pelikan (1971), 226–7.

40 Kelly (1989), 289, on this heresy cf. 289–95. Cf. Grillmeier (1975), 329–40, 341–434; Pelikan (1971), 239–40; Benko (1993), 250–1.

41 On Apollinarianism in the Nestorian controversy cf. Young (1983), 258–63; McGuckin (1994), in index, s.v. "Apollinarism"; Grillmeier (1975), 489; Benko (1993), 255–6.

usage. The statement of Gregory of Nazianzus (sed. 380–1) must have been well known to all his successors in the see of Constantinople:[42]

> If anyone does not believe the holy Mary to be Theotokos, he is without the Godhead. If anyone should say that Christ passed through the Virgin as through a channel, and was not formed in her at once in a divine and human way, divine because without the work of man, human because subject to the law of human conception, he is equally atheistic.[43]

Actually Nestorius did not reject the term 'Theotokos' but he wanted it to be used appropriately. Like the other Antiochian theologians he used it in parallel with the term 'Anthropotokos'. The point was that the term 'Theotokos' implies that the eternal Logos issued from the womb; what the Antiochians denied was that it should be thought that the Logos in his divine nature was born of the Virgin.

Nestorius's intention was to clarify the term 'Theotokos' but the circumstances were against him, and he provoked a large opposition. He was asked to make a statement affirming the orthodoxy of the veneration of Mary as the Theotokos. The compromise Nestorius found in the following negotiations was the term 'Christotokos', which pleased no one.[44] Cyril was informed of and involved in the dispute in the capital from its very beginning,[45] after which he became preoccupied with Christology, as a huge number of texts witness. From the Theotokos controversy there are three well-known documents: two letters to Nestorius before the Council of Ephesus,[46] and one to John of Antioch after the council. The letter to John, "Let the Heavens Rejoice", dates from

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[42] In the authentic texts of John Chrysostom we do not find the word 'Theotokos', which, however, does not mean that he had not accepted its use, cf. *Marienlexikon*, s.v. "Johannes Krysostomus".

[43] Translation from O'Carroll (1983), s.v. "Gregory of Nazianzus"; Ep. 101, *SC* 208, I.16; *PG* 37.177C: Εἰ τις οὐ Θεοτόκον τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν ὑπολαμβάνει, χωρίς ἐστὶ τῆς θεότητος. Εἴ τις ὡς διὰ σωλῆνος τῆς Παρθένου διαδραμεῖν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐν αὐτῇ διαπεπλάσθαι λέγοι θεϊκῶς ἅμα καὶ ἀνθρωπικῶς· θεϊκῶς μὲν, ὅτι χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς· ἀνθρωπικῶς δὲ, ὅτι νόμῳ κυήσεως, ὁμοίως ἄθεως. Cf. Constas (1994), 48.

[44] McGuckin (1994), 27–35.

[45] McGuckin (1994), 29. The capital did not have its own school of theology.

[46] Cf. Cyril of Alexandria (ed. Wickham, 1983), xxi: "The first two (Cyril's second and third letters to Nestorius) are at the centre of the battle." The second letter was dated Mechir 430 (26th January to 24th February), Ep. 4, *PG* 77.44–9; *ACO* I.1.1.25–8; translation in Tanner (1990), 40–4, cf. McGuckin (1994), 262–5. The third letter was delivered to Nestorius on 30 November, 430, Ep. 17, *PG* 77.105–21; *ACO* I.1.1. 33–42; translation in Tanner (1990), 50–61, cf. McGuckin (1994), 266–75.

433 and includes the *formula reunionis*.[47] In Nestorius's reply to Cyril's second letter[48] it can be seen that the precise object of the conflict between them was the notion of the 'Theotokos',[49] an expression which was not possible according to Antiochian logic.[50] The opponents of Nestorius interpreted his manner of separating godhead and humanity in Christ as a teaching of the heresy of Paul of Samosata (d. 270). They accused him of making Christ into a dual personality, in whom the divine hypostasis spoke and acted at one moment, and the human at the next—which implied the absurd conclusion that God had two sons.[51]

The Theotokos schism grew rapidly to enormous dimensions; it involved ecclesiastical and imperial politics, in which the struggle for power played no insignificant role. An international synod became a reality.[52] Through the intervention of the empress Pulcheria Ephesus was determined as the venue, where the greatest church dedicated to Mary then existed.[53] The council was opened by Cyril even though the Oriental bishops, the party of John of Antioch, had not yet arrived. In the first session on 22 June, 431, Nestorius, who was not present, was condemned under the presidency of Cyril. The Council of Ephesus made no new credal formula but confirmed the creed of Nicaea. The decisive dogmatic act of the council was the reading of the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius and Nestorius's reply to it and the verdict of the

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[47] Ep. 39, *PG* 77.173–81; *ACO* I.1.4.15–20; English translation McGuckin (1994), 343–8; Tanner (1990), 69–70: "Formula of Union"; Tanner (1990), 70–4: "Letter of Cyril to John of Antioch about Peace".

[48] *ACO* I.1.1.29–32; Tanner (1990), 44–50 with English translation, cf. McGuckin (1994), 364–8.

[49] Tanner (1990), 47: Πανταχοῦ τῆς θείας γραφῆς, ἡνίκα ἄν μνήμην τῆς δεσποτικῆς οἰκονομίας ποιῆται, γέννησις ἡμῖν καὶ πάθος οὐ τῆς θεότητος, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος τοῦ Χριστοῦ παραδίδοται, ὡς καλεῖσθαι κατὰ ἀκριβεστέραν προσηγορίαν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον Χριστοτόκον, οὐ θεοτόκον. "Holy Scripture, wherever it recalls the Lord's economy, speaks of the birth and suffering not of the godhead but the humanity of Christ, so that the holy virgin is more accurately termed mother of Christ than mother of God." Translation also McGuckin (1994), 366. Cf. Meyendorff (1975), 16–17.

[50] See the whole context in the reply of Nestorius.

[51] f. McGuckin (1994), 31–2, see also in index, s.v. "Two Sons' Theory".

[52] McGuckin (1994), 20–53.

[53] Holum (1989: 163–4 n. 86), relates that a tradition found on both sides of the dispute held that it was Pulcheria who brought down Nestorius. However, Holum's claim (165) that "Pulcheria's efforts had guaranteed that the Ephesian synod would be a farce" is hyperbole. Cf. McGuckin (1994), 47, 60–1. It appears that the south stoa of the Olympieum of Ephesus, dedicated to Mary, functioned as the church for the Council; cf. Karwiese (1999), 81–5.

council upon them. The council declared that the dogma of Nicaea is expressed in Cyril's letter, and condemned Nestorius's teachings.[54]

Holum recounts that the people of Ephesus rejoiced as they escorted Cyril and his friends to their quarters.[55] That information is from Cyril's letter.[56] Holum describes the happening from an eyewitness's point of view: "Women swinging censers led the way, for this was a victory of the Virgin Theotokos. In her honor incense and candle illumination decorated the evening." Cyril does not mention Mary but Holum maintains that studies of popular religious practice in the late antique world support the likelihood of Mary being the object of such a popular demonstration.[57] Holum's opinion seems to be accepted by all scholars. Consequently the following questions may be raised: if in the homilies after Ephesus this victorious atmosphere manifests itself in the encomia to the Theotokos with salutations,[58] what other reason than the resolution of the Council of Ephesus could explain the obvious triumphant character of the Akathistos? And further, should the refutation of the "impieties and blasphemies" of Nestorius not be already a sufficient motive for composing a hymn of the victory over heresy which confirms the orthodoxy of the term 'Theotokos'? The textual sources do not answer these questions directly, but architecture does: the basilica Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome was built immediately after Ephesus to proclaim the victory of the Theotokos.[59] I believe the connection of the Akathistos with the Council of Ephesus is more likely than not.

At Ephesus the Oriental bishops, who opposed Cyril, assembled round John of Antioch. In this circle a credal formula, expressed in terms of Antiochian Christology, was worked out. With some alterations it was to became the *formula reunionis,* an 'agreement of peace' between the two ecclesiastical leaders, Cyril and John, and between the churches they represented. Cyril's letter to John, "Let the Heavens Rejoice"[60] of 433, which formally restored relations, includes the profession of faith, the *formula reunionis*, which eighteen years later at Chalcedon was canon-

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54 McGuckin (1994), 53–107; Grillmeier (1975), 484–7.
55 Holum (1989), 166.
56 *ACO* I.1.1.118.5–10.
57 Holum (1989), 166.
58 See below for my explanation for the emergence of the salutations to Mary.
59 Wellen (1960), 93–132.
60 *ACO* I.1.4.15–20; Ep. 39, *PG* 77.173–81; translation McGuckin (1994), 343–8.

ized as an authoritative expression of orthodox Christology.[61] But it did not stop the Nestorian dispute. There were bishops of the Antiochian school who did not approve the formulation of the nature of Christ expressed in the *formula reunionis*, because they had never acknowledged the Christology promulgated by Cyril.[62] The schism became increasingly apparent with respect to the writings of Nestorius's teacher, the great authority of the Antiochian school, Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 429).[63]

Consequently, in 435 Proclus as archbishop of Constantinople received an audience of Armenian clergymen, who asked him to investigate whether the forwarded writings of Theodore were unorthodox.[64] Proclus answered them in the *Tomus ad Armenios de Fide*,[65] whose aim was to reject the dualistic notion of 'two sons'.[66] The Tome is an important Christological document, characterized by its deliberately mediating stance between the Christologies of Alexandria and Antioch. This document demonstrates that Proclus was a very good theologian. He succeeded in distinguishing between the nature and the hypostasis, and he used "already the language of the Fathers of Chalcedon".[67] As regards the Akathistos, the Tome is a document which shows the greatest emphasis is laid on the immutability of the divine nature of the Logos, expressed by the word ἀναλλοίωτος ('unchanged')[68]—a word which appears emphatically also in Prooemium I of the Akathistos ("He who

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[61] On the process of reconciliation see McGuckin (1994), 110–17. Cf. Kelly (1989), 327–30.

[62] Constas (1994), 73–8.

[63] Constas (1994), 86: "During the years following the Council of Ephesus and the Union of 433, the Christological controversy spread to embrace the precursors of Nestorius, i.e. the deceased bishops Theodore of Mopsuestia and, to a much lesser extent, Theodore of Tarsus."

[64] Constas (1994), 98–9.

[65] *ACO* IV.2.187–95; *PG* 65.856–73. Cf. Constas (1994), 100–5.

[66] Constas (1994), 100–5. Cf. McGuckin (1994), 136; Grillmeier (1975), 521–3.

[67] Grillmeier (1975), 521–3. *ACO* IV.2.191.20–1: ἐγὼ γὰρ ἕνα εἰδώς τε καὶ διδαχθεὶς εὐσεβῶς υἱόν, μίαν ὁμολογῶ τὴν τοῦ σαρκωθέντος Θεοῦ λόγου ὑπόστασιν. "I know and have been piously taught one Son and I believe in one hypostasis of God the Word made flesh" (trans. Constas 1994: 242). This formulation "can be taken as Proclus' Christological motto" (Constas 1994: 242).

[68] In the context, in which Proclus tries to make a distinction between the person and nature of Christ, he uses three times the word ἀναλλοίωτος, when he argues that godhead never changes: "for godhead remains above change" (μένει γὰρ ἡ θεότης ἀλλοιώσεως ἀνωτέρα, *ACO* IV.2.190.2); "the unchanged Word" (ὁ ἀναλλοίωτος λόγος, 190.13–14); "the unchangingness of his nature" (τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον τῆς φύσεως, 190.16). Cf. Peltomaa (1997).

bowed down the heavens and came down is contained unchanged but whole in you", Ὁ κλίνας τῇ καταβάσει τοὺς οὐρανοὺς χωρεῖται ἀναλλοιώτως ὅλος ἐν σοί). This evidence of correspondence does not necessarily mean that the Akathistos and the *Tomus* represent the same period or even the same century, but it certainly proves the same Christological approach. I discuss this further in the section on "Christology".

"The long search for peace", as McGuckin describes the epoch after the *formula reunionis*, ended on the part of Cyril with his death in 444. Peace was still far away. After the death of Cyril a struggle of his *mia physis* formula ("one nature incarnate of God the Word", μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη) opened by the Constantinopolitan archimandrite Eutyches led to the Second Council of Ephesus of 449.[69] The Eutychean case did not focus on the term 'Theotokos', since the issue did not deal with the Incarnation but the interpretation of the *mia physis* of the Incarnate.[70] The resolution of the Second Council of Ephesus was a catastrophe for the attempts to reconcile the Christological questions; among other things the *formula reunionis* was cancelled. Combined efforts of both Church and State were needed to settle the confusion, and perhaps, in the first place, the death of the emperor Theodosius II. For it was Pulcheria, who, having entered a formal marriage after the death of the emperor, together with the new emperor Marcian corrected the doctrinal and ecclesiastical situation by summoning an ecumenical council.[71] The council was held in October 451 in Chalcedon, in the suburb of Constantinople, "where imperial presence and supervision were easier".[72] There over five hundred bishops from all over the imperium confessed their faith in "one and the same" Christ. The statement of Chalcedon, the *definitio fidei*,[73] was a solution to the problem of how to express the distinction in natures and the unity of the person in Christ.[74] That solution is known for its formulation "in two natures with-

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[69] Kelly (1989), 330–4; Grillmeier (1975), 523–6.

[70] *ACO* II.1.1.143.10–11: ὁμολογῶ ἐκ δύο φύσεων γεγεννῆσθαι τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν πρὸ τῆς ἑνώσεως, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἕνωσιν μίαν φύσιν ὁμολογῶ. "I confess our Lord was begotten of two natures before the union, but I confess one nature after the union."

[71] Cf. Holum (1989), 212–16; Meyendorff (1989), 167–78.

[72] Meyendorff (1989), 167.

[73] Meyendorff (1989), 177: "The status of the definition, or *horos* (ὅρος) was never intended to be that of a new creed. The use of the term 'creed of Chalcedon' in contemporary manuals is misleading." See the Greek text and the translation of the *definitio fidei* below, pp. 87–8.

[74] Grillmeier (1975), 543–50. Cf. Meyendorff (1989), 164–78; Kelly (1989), 338–43.

out confusion, without change, without division, without separation", and "into one person and one hypostasis". This did not, however, cause the bitter doctrinal disputes which had occupied the period after Ephesus to abate—on the contrary, it contributed to the rise of the monophysite movement.

The discourse on Christ's natures and person had varied stages with distinctive emphases.[75] It can be stated generally that at Ephesus more emphasis had been placed on the physical details of the Incarnation. And due to this stress the attention was focused on the womb of Mary, which also characterizes homilies written during the Nestorian controversy. At Chalcedon the *locus* of the issue had been shifted to the question of how the inner unity of the person of Christ was organized.[76] One can see plainly that the Akathistos Hymn is a description of how the Incarnation occurred, and the focus is on the womb of Mary,[77] whereas it is difficult to determine without an analysis to what degree the hymn reflects the discourse on the unity of the person of Christ.

The great issues of the Nestorian controversy are found in the Akathistos Hymn. The hymn explains the manner of the Incarnation and maintains that godhead does not change. This refers to the state of the Christological discourse which prevailed at the time of the Council of Ephesus and during its aftermath. At that time the Theotokos issue was centred around the notion of 'God the Logos born of the Virgin'. The Akathistos asserts that the Logos as the subject of the Incarnation was born of the Virgin (15.1–5). The virtual content of the word 'Theotokos' is expressed in strophe 23, the second-last strophe of the hymn, which states that the Lord dwelt in the womb of the Theotokos. It makes clear that the reason for praising her is that she gave birth to God, whereafter the first salutation affirms: "Hail, tabernacle of God and the Word" (23.6). The expression ἡ τεκοῦσα τὸν Λόγον ("you who gave birth to the Word") in the last strophe shows that the epithet 'Theotokos' is essentially involved with the Logos. So, the Theotokos issue is manifest

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[75] Cf. Grillmeier (1975), 445–6.

[76] Grillmeier (1975), 541: "Ephesus had left unfulfilled a task which by this stage of development was long overdue: that of creating a dogmatic formula which made it possible to express the unity and the distinction in Christ in clear terms."

[77] Explicitly: "I see him . . . in your womb (μήτρᾳ)" (Pr. 6), "her fruitful womb (νηδύν)" (4.2), "bearing God in her womb (μήτραν)" (5.1), "pastured in Mary's womb (μήτραν)" (7.5), "from the seedless womb (γαστρός)" (13.3), "dwelling in your womb (μήτρᾳ)" (19.5), "dwelt in your womb (γαστρί)" (23.3).

in the Akathistos; there is the definition of the term and the justification of its use, which comes direct from Christ who "made you holy, made you glorious, and taught us all to cry to you" (23.5). Further, the official status of the Theotokos is stated in four salutations: "Hail, precious diadem of pious kings; hail, holy exaltation of devout priests; hail, immovable tower of the Church; hail, impregnable wall of the kingdom" (23.10–13). Evidently strophe 23 is the proclamation of the Theotokos.

The Veneration of Mary

The cursory examination of the text has shown that Mary is the chief character of the hymn. Her position is very clear as far as it is justified by Christology. But in the hymn there are expressions which are not connected with Christology, e.g.: "Hail, guide of the Persians to temperance" (9.16), "Hail, love conquering all desire" (13.17), "Hail, fair nursing-mother of virgins" (19.16) or "Hail, precious diadem of pious kings" (23.10). Such claims probably associate Mary either with a historical situation or with contexts which reflect traditional notions of Mary or the author's subjective experience of her. For interpretation it would be important to know the stage of the development of the cult of Mary in the first half of the fifth century and especially in Constantinople, which is traditionally considered as the place where the hymn was created. However, although the early cult of Mary has been a subject of research,[78] so far no systematic study of scholarly significance has been made, a deficiency which Averil Cameron noted twenty years ago.[79] For this reason one has to content oneself with very few facts.

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[78] E.g. *Primordial Cultus Mariani* (1967); Felici (1989); Benko (1993).

[79] Cameron (1978), 79. In this respect the title of the book of Vasiliki Limberis, *The Divine Heiress. The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* promises too much. Limberis has built her work on a hypothesis, which she is not able to prove on the basis of historical documents: "Pulcheria and Proclus were creating a local Constantinopolitan cult to the Theotokos based on Pulcheria's own imperial conceptions, perceptions, and projections of who the Theotokos was" (112). Objectively, we know nothing about Pulcheria's "own imperial conceptions, perceptions or projections of who the Theotokos was". On the other hand, Holum's interpretation of Pulcheria's personality, which Limberis has adopted, can by no means be considered as a historical fact to justify her claim. This fundamental fault makes Limberis's explanation of the emergence of the cult misleading.

Before the Council of Ephesus the Constantinopolitans celebrated a Marian feast, of which the famous homily of Proclus is the only evidence we have:

> It is the Virgin's festival, my brethren, that summons us today to words of praise. This is a feast that has blessings to bestow on those who assemble to keep it. . . . She who has assembled us here is the holy Mary.[80]

According to M. Jugie that feast was the Commemoration of Mary (μνήμη Μαρίας) and it originated in the feasts of the saints or martyrs.[81] In another Marian homily of Proclus there is indeed such a connection.[82] The themes of the Commemoration of Mary involve the virginal conception and birth, the Fall and the redemptive plan of God.[83] Jugie supposes that the feast was devoted to Mary as the New Eve because of her part in salvation.[84] R. A. Fletcher sees the Commemoration of Mary as an integral part of the Nativity celebrations.[85] Fletcher's analysis of homilies on the Annunciation theme in the Ephesian context shows a structural correspondence between these homilies and the Akathistos. His conclusion is that the Akathistos "is exactly suited to the Commemoration of Mary", which, as he suggests, "formed part of the Nativity festival in the years between the Council of Ephesus and the moment when the festival of the Annunciation was established on March 25th".[86] Although Fletcher has convincingly pointed out the original context of the Akathistos Hymn, the place of the Akathistos in the liturgy of the church of Constantinople remains an open question, because liturgical research has clarified only the main features of that period.[87]

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[80] *ACO* I.1.1.103.4–5.11: Παρθενικὴ πανήγυρις σήμερον τὴν γλώτταν, ἀδελφοὶ, πρὸς εὐφημίαν καλεῖ καὶ ἡ παροῦσα ἑορτὴ τοῖς συνελθοῦσιν ὠφελείας γίνεται πρόξενος . . . συνεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ἡ ἁγία Μαρία. Constas (1994), 53, supposes that this feast was added to the liturgical calendar by Atticus (sed. 406–25) or archbishop Sisinnius (sed. 426–7).

[81] Jugie (1926), 317. Jugie's study is still the most important discussion of this feast.

[82] Hom. 5, "On the Nativity of Christ", Constas (1994), 215, translation 224: "All the feast days of the saints are wondrous (πᾶσαι μὲν αἱ μαρτυρικαὶ πανηγύρεις θαυμασταί). . . . But even though all the commemorations of the saints are wondrous, none of them can compare to the glory of the present feast" (*PG* 65.716A, 717A). Caro dates the homily to 434–46.

[83] Jugie (1926), 317.

[84] Jugie (1944), 173.

[85] Fletcher (1958), 60–1. Fletcher differentiates between Christmas as the single date of 25 December, and the Nativity festival, as possibly extending over more than one day.

[86] Fletcher (1958), 64. Cf. Beck (1959), 260.

[87] Cf. Talley (1986); Taft (1986).

At the same time when Fletcher discusses the structural similarity between the homilies after Ephesus and the Akathistos, he happens to offer an argument for dating an anonymous Marian hymn, which Trypanis, on the grounds of its primitive form, dates relatively close to the Council of Ephesus and considers as a source of the Akathistos.[88] However, it is quite evident that this hymn "On the Virgin" with the refrain "Hail, you who are lauded as virgin after childbirth" (χαῖρε, ἡ μετὰ τόκον ὑμνουμένη παρθένος), does not have the structure which justifies Fletcher in attributing the Akathistos to the Nativity festival, since the themes of the Annunciation and the Infancy are lacking. But if it is not suited to the same festival as the Akathistos, it means that it is a later composition than the Akathistos, and, indeed, there is in the text one Christological expression which points clearly to the Justinianic period.[89] So, I conclude that the striking parallels with the Akathistos, which Trypanis refers to, are a proof that the author used the Akathistos as a source.

Even though the hymn "On the Virgin" does not present the Marian hymnography of the period immediately after Ephesus, it is more than likely that through the centuries before Ephesus hymns to Mary were composed also in Greek, of which, however, only the best exponent from the Ephesian period has survived for us.[90] It is a commonly accep-

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[88] Trypanis (1968), 160.

[89] The idea of strophe 7, "divinity had neither a confused mixture united in flesh nor division" (ἡ θεότης τῇ σαρκὶ ἡνωμένον οὐκ ἔσχεν ἢ συγχύσεως φυρμὸν ἢ διαίρεσιν ὅλως), is to be found in the Anathemas against the "Three Chapters" of the Second Council of Constantinople of 553, which condemned on the one hand Apollinarius and Eutyches, and on the other Theodore and Nestorius: Ἡ γὰρ κατὰ σύνθεσιν ἕνωσις ἐπὶ τοῦ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστηρίου, οὐ μόνον ἀσύγχυτα τὰ συνελθόντα διαφυλάττει, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ διαίρεσιν ἐπιδέχεται. "In the mystery of Christ the union of synthesis not only conserves without confusing the elements that come together but also allows no division" (Tanner 1990: 115). But already in the imperial profession of faith of 527 of Justinian there are formulations which express the idea of strophe 7 (note especially the word φυρμόν): ἀναθεματίζομεν πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν, ἐχαιρέτως δὲ Νεστόριον τὸν ἀνθρωπολάτρην, τὸν διαιροῦντα τὸν ἕνα κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ... καὶ Ἀπολλινάριον τὸν ψυχοφθόρον, τὸν ἄνουν λέγοντα τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ θεὸν ἡμῶν καὶ σύγχυσιν ἤτοι φυρμὸν εἰσάγοντα τῇ ἐνανθρωπήσει τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (*Codex Iustiniani* I.1.5). "We anathematize all heresy, especially Nestorius the human-worshipper, the divider of our one Lord Jesus Christ ... and Apollinarius the spirit-destroyer, who declares our Lord Jesus Christ the son of God and our God to be soulless, and imports a confusion or mixture into the Incarnation of the only-begotten son of God."

[90] The question specifically of the Marian hymnography is far too complicated to discuss here; on the general development cf. Mitsakis (1971a).

ted notion that highly rhetorical homily and festal Church chants were closely related,[91] and that they corresponded thematically to each other.[92] So, if the Akathistos is as early as I claim, it should not display themes which are absent from the homilies of the fourth and early fifth centuries.

The homilies indeed offer abundant material for the examination of Marian themes, as Caro's work alone shows. However, the problems of date and authenticity limit their use greatly.[93] In the tradition of Akathistos research there is a problematic text, which demands a clear stand; it is Homily 6 in the Proclian corpus of Migne's edition, "Laudatio Sanctae Dei Genitricis Mariae", *PG* 65.721–57. Grosdidier de Matons considers that Homily 6, because of its kontakion-like dialogues, represents the prehistory of kontakion poetry before the Akathistos Hymn,[94] and this approach seems to be standard among the modern scholars who deal with the Akathistos. Leroy, who prepared the critical edition of the homily, dates it with certainty to the period before the middle of the fifth century.[95] But Caro and Aubineau demonstrate convincingly the weakness of Leroy's argument,[96] and one has to agree with them that Homily 6 is evidently a compilation, whose stylistically different parts represent different centuries between the fifth and seventh, and maybe up to the ninth. On the other hand, my work with the authentic Marian homilies of Proclus has made it clear that especially the passages which are "like kontakion poetry" differ most from Proclus, presenting an image of Mary which is comparable with the picture Romanos paints of Mary. For Mary as a personality with emotions and feelings is totally absent in the homilies of Proclus and his contemporaries. For these reasons I dismiss Homily 6. Consequently, this orientation changes my view of Proclus as a Marian preacher, of the relationship between the homilies of Proclus and the Akathistos, and of the development of hymnography in general.

Let us now turn to the themes and first to the question whether the Marian themes of the homilies correspond with the thematic contents of

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91 E.g. Norden (1958), 861.
92 E.g. the view of G. Jouassard, cited by Caro (1971–3), 24.
93 Caro (1971–3), 25–8. Cf. Cunningham and Allen (1998), 3.
94 Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 18–19.
95 Leroy (1967), 292. Cf. Marx (1940), 90–3.
96 Caro (1971–3), 308–44. Aubineau (1988), 589–92.

the Akathistos. Caro's survey makes the comparison easy:[97] the fourth-century homilies focus predominantly on the Annunciation; the homilies from the first half of the fifth century before the Ephesian period reflect the discourse of the Incarnation of the divine Logos; the nineteen homilies between 428 and 449 are centred around the two main issues of the Nestorian controversy, the Incarnation of the Logos and the mystery of the virgin or divine birth; after Ephesus the themes vary, and among the old themes there is a new one, that of the Hypapante, a theme which the Hypapante feast makes concrete. In other words, these themes reflect the theological discourse involved with Mary, and it shows a clear trend up to the period of Chalcedon: the Annunciation, the Incarnation of the Logos, and the mystery of the virgin or divine birth. It is evident that these are the main theological themes of the Akathistos.

As regards the praises addressed to Mary, the homilies testify that it was precisely the Nestorian controversy which prompted exaltations of Mary, expressed in encomia, exclamations and salutations.[98] D. M. Montagna maintains that the salutations to Mary, hence the genre of salutations (χαιρετισμοί), developed in homiletic writings on the basis of Gabriel's salutation.[99] The salutations of the Akathistos in turn are supposed to have taken their form from the homilies.[100] My opinion is that specifically in the salutations of the Akathistos two different ideas are united. The first derives from the salutation of the angel "Hail, favoured one" (χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη) as Montagna argues, and the second from the ancient institution of acclamation.[101] An indirect but strong support for my view comes from R. A. Fletcher.[102] Because of the complexity of the matter, a brief survey of his study is needed.

Fletcher examined the origins of the festival of the Annunciation in Constantinople and investigated among others homilies which were delivered in the Nativity festival in the first half of the fifth century. Homilies with the theme of the Incarnation tended to treat also the

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97 See Caro (1971–3), 684: table of the thematic contents of the homilies.

98 Cf. Caro (1971–3), 686.

99 On the development of the genre, see Montagna (1962), 480–8.

100 Grosdidier de Matons (1977), 36 n. 185. A hypothesis presented by Mitsakis (1971b), 486–7, that the model comes from Ephrem the Syrian, as Krypiakiewicz claimed (1909), 368–9, is not credible.

101 Cf. Klauser's outstanding and exhaustive article on the institution of the Acclamation (Klauser 1950). See also Wellesz (1962), index, s.v. "Acclamations", esp. origins (98 ff.).

102 Fletcher (1958), 53–65.

theme of the Annunciation. According to Fletcher, after the Council of Ephesus these homilies changed clearly: the stories of the Annunciation and the Infancy of Christ tended to be included, and the salutations to Mary were added. Fletcher explains what might have happened:

> There is nothing incongruous in the fact that the Nativity festival in the years immediately following the Council of Ephesus should have taken a form in which, besides the emphasis on Redemption through the Incarnation, the whole story of the Infancy found a place. . . . At a time when the different scenes in the story had not yet been allotted their own separate festivals the Nativity festival would suitably incorporate all of them. At the same time the emphasis laid on the position of Mary by the arguments that led to Ephesus and the downfall of Nestorius would ensure her share in the festival of the Incarnation. The triumph of orthodoxy was seen as a triumph of Mary and led to the urge to praise her in Χαιρετισμοί and to join with these praises the story of the Annunciation.[103]

Fletcher does not speak about the Akathistos Hymn, but about the homilies on the theme of the Annunciation which were delivered at the Nativity festival. What is important, however, is that he explains the appearance of the salutations in the homilies by the triumph of Mary at Ephesus. M. Starowieyski interprets the salutations found in the Palestinian homilies after Ephesus in the same way.[104] It is strange that Fletcher does not mention the salutations of the Akathistos in this context, even though he attributes the Akathistos to the Nativity festival on the basis of the structural correspondence with these homilies. Anyhow, it is obvious that his explanation is relevant to the Akathistos as well.

So, as I see it, the emergence of the Akathistos Hymn's series of salutations was influenced by the tradition of acclamation, since the acclamations an emperor received for his victory form an obvious analogy with the salutations to Mary for her triumph at Ephesus. The scene of the Annunciation with the angel's salutation, already understood as testifying to Mary's exceptional role, offered the natural framework within which to express the salutations in the first instance. But since the reason for praising Mary was not restricted to the Annunciation theme alone, the hymnographer could freely use the salutations in all the contexts he considered suitable. Once the strophic pattern with salutations was created, its repetition was merely a question of appropriateness.

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[103] Fletcher (1958), 62.

[104] Starowieyski (1989), 124 (translated): "They express the cause of joy and indicate the person to be saluted (Eve, Maria)."

Let us now examine the substance of those high-flown expressions of praise through some examples. The section "Proclus of Constantinople as a Marian Preacher" will show the authentic Constantinopolitan emphasis of Marian praise, but among the other homilies from the Ephesian context there is no better example than the encomium which Cyril of Alexandria delivered during the course of the proceedings at Ephesus. It is included in a homily which dates from the immediate aftermath of the condemnation of Nestorius.[105] I cite the encomium in its entirety, because in it we have the description of the 'object of the controversy', composed by the theologian, whose influence was great:

> Be hailed by us, holy mystical Trinity, who called us all together in this Church of the Theotokos Mary.
> Be hailed by us, Mary the Theotokos, the holy treasure of the whole world, the inextinguishable torch, the crown of virginity, the sceptre of orthodoxy, the indissoluble temple, and the place of the uncircumscribed One, the mother and virgin, on whose account "the blessed One who comes in the name of the Lord" is addressed by name in the holy Gospels.
> Be hailed, you who enclosed the uncontainable One in your holy virginal womb;
> [be hailed], through whom the Trinity is hallowed,
> [be hailed], through whom the cross is called precious and is worshipped throughout the world,
> [be hailed], for whose sake heaven exults,
> [be hailed], by means of whom the angels and archangels rejoice,
> [be hailed], by means of whom the demons are banished,
> [be hailed], by means of whom the devil, seeking to seduce, fell from heaven,
> [be hailed], through whom the fallen creature will be taken up again into heaven,
> [be hailed], through whom all creation, possessed by idolatrous madness, has come to the knowledge of truth,
> [be hailed], through whom baptism sanctifies those who believe,
> [be hailed], through whom there is the oil of gladness,
> [be hailed], by whose assistance the churches have been built in the whole world,
> [be hailed], by whose assistance the gentiles have been led to repent.
> And why say more? Through whom the only-begotten Son of God gave light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

[105] Hom. 4, "Cyrilli Alexandrini Ephesi in Nestorium Habita, quando Septem ad Sanctam Marian Descenderunt", *PG* 77.992–6; *ACO* I.1.2.102–4. Schwartz has denied the authorship of Cyril, but Santer (1975), 144–5, has refuted his argument. Cf. Caro (1971–3), 269–83.

[be hailed], on whose account the prophets foretold,
[be hailed], through whom the Apostles preached salvation to the gentiles,
[be hailed], through whom the dead will rise,
[be hailed], because of whom the emperors rule through the holy Trinity.
Which human being is able to describe much-praised Mary?
The virginal womb, O, wondrous thing! I am struck by the miracle.[106]

From this it is clear that Cyril subordinates a great number of sentences with the anaphora "through whom" (δι' ἧς) to the phrase "Be hailed, you who enclosed the uncontainable One in your holy virginal womb" (χαίροις, ἡ τὸν ἀχώρητον χωρήσασα ἐν μήτρᾳ ἁγίᾳ παρθενικῇ). Depending on the context, the anaphora can be translated in different ways. The basic idea, however, is that salvation becomes concrete when Mary carries God in her womb, in other words, salvation occurs through Mary. It is obvious that in principle, according to the 'model of Cyril', Mary can be connected with very differing contexts; besides the doctrinal connection Mary is linked with the whole Christian faith and

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[106] *PG* 77.992BC: Χαίροις τοίνυν παρ' ἡμῶν ἁγία μυστικὴ Τρίας, ἡ τούτους ἡμᾶς πάντας συγκαλεσαμένη ἐπὶ τήνδε τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τῆς Θεοτόκου Μαρίας. / Χαίροις παρ' ἡμῶν, Μαρία Θεοτόκε, τὸ σεμνὸν κειμήλιον ἁπάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἡ λαμπὰς ἡ ἄσβεστος, ὁ στέφανος τῆς παρθενίας, τὸ σκῆπτρον τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας, ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἀκατάλυτος, καὶ χωρίον τοῦ ἀχωρήτου, ἡ μήτηρ καὶ παρθένος· / δι' ἧς ὀνομάζεται ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις Εὐαγγελίοις εὐλογημένος, ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου· / [χαίροις], ἡ τὸν ἀχώρητον χωρήσασα ἐν μήτρᾳ ἁγίᾳ παρθενικῇ· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς Τριὰς ἁγιάζεται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς σταυρὸς τίμιος ὀνομάζεται, καὶ προσκυνεῖται εἰς πάσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀγάλλεται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς ἄγγελοι καὶ ἀρχάγγελοι εὐφραίνονται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς δαίμονες φυγαδεύονται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς διάβολος πειράζων ἔπεσεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς τὸ ἐκπεσὸν πλάσμα εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀναλαμβάνεται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις εἰδωλομανίᾳ κατεχομένη, εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλήλυθεν· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς βάπτισμα ἅγιον γίνεται τοῖς πιστεύουσι· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην Ἐκκλησίαι τεθεμελίωνται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς ἔθνη ἄγονται εἰς μετάνοιαν. / Καὶ τί δεῖ πολλὰ λέγειν; δι' ἧς ὁ μονογενὴς Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ φῶς ἔλαμψε τοῖς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένοις· / [χαίροις], δι' ἣν προφῆται προεμήνυσαν· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς ἀπόστολοι κηρύττουσι σωτηρίαν τοῖς ἔθνεσι· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται· / [χαίροις], δι' ἧς βασιλεῖς βασιλεύουσι, διὰ Τριάδος ἁγίας. / Καὶ τίς δυνατὸς ἀνθρώπων λέγειν τὴν πολυύμνητον Μαρίαν; / Ἡ μήτρα ἡ παρθενική. ὦ τοῦ θαύματος· ἐκπλήττει με τὸ θαῦμα. Schwartz proposed the correction (*ACO* I.1.2.103.3): δι' ἧς βασιλεῖς βασιλεύ. Διὰ Τριάδος ἁγίας (καὶ τίς δυνατὸς ἀνθρώπων λέγειν τὴν πολυύμνητον Μαρίαν;) ἡ μήτρα ἡ παρθενική ("through whom you rule, O king. The womb [kept] virginal (and who can describe the much-praised Mary?) through the Holy Trinity") but I do not follow him, because the idea that the emperors rule through the holy Trinity was a commonplace. On the other hand, it is not credible that the preacher had destroyed a theological idea (Διὰ Τριάδος ἁγίας ἡ μήτρα ἡ παρθενική, "the womb [kept] virginal through the Holy Trinity") at the very end of the praise by the insertion of a rhetorical question. Cf. Caro (1971–3), 282–3.

the life of Christians, the emperors included. The paradox 'the container of the uncontainable', which Cyril twice uses so emphatically (χωρίον τοῦ ἀχωρήτου, ἡ τὸν ἀχώρητον χωρήσασα), deserves special attention, since this paradox is characteristic of the homilies of the Ephesian context. It is hardly an accident that in the Akathistos, in the central strophe of the hymn immediately after the description of the Incarnation, the same paradox appears as an epithet of Mary: "Hail, container of the uncontainable God" (χαῖρε, θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου χώρα, 15.6).

Except for the epithet "container of the uncontainable" (χωρίον τοῦ ἀχωρήτου), two other metaphorical epithets of Cyril's praise, "the inextinguishable torch" and "the indissoluble temple" (ἡ λαμπὰς ἡ ἄσβεστος and ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἀκατάλυτος), are found in a modified form in the Akathistos (λαμπάς, 21.1 and ναός, 23.2). They appear also in Proclus and Hesychius of Jerusalem.[107] As regards the Marian epithets in general, Caro's summary shows that the homilists of the Ephesian period exploited a great number of frequently repeated epithets (39). Many of them clearly refer to the Old Testament.[108] But epithets appear already in the homilies before the Nestorian controversy,[109] which indicates that the Marian epithets were not a new invention at the time when Nestorius provoked their creation. However, it is certain that the Theotokos schism contributed to their emergence.[110] Hesychius lists instances of epithets which, according to him, are used by different homilists.[111] And Chrysippus of Jerusalem, after a praise with salutations, states: "With these and many other similar successive (epithets) the homilists inspired by God salute her."[112] In the light of this evidence of the use of great numbers of epithets during the Ephesian period, the appearance of 144 different epithets in the salutations of the Akathistos does not look exceptional. Among them there are the epithets

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[107] Cf. Caro (1971–3), 685.

[108] The arc of the covenant, the temple, the tabernacle, the throne, the golden vase, the lampstand, the burning bush, the closed gate, the fleece (of Gideon), the rod of Aaron etc. Cf. the section "Proclus of Constantinople as a Marian Preacher" (Old Testament typologies).

[109] Cf. Caro (1971–3), 685.

[110] Cf. Aubineau (1978), 145–7; Montagna (1962); Constas (1995), 177.

[111] *PG* 93.1461A–B: Aubineau (1978), 158. According to Aubineau (147–9) the homily was delivered immediately after the Council of Ephesus, in 432 or 433.

[112] "Chrysippi Hierosolymorum Presbyteri Oratio in Sanctam Mariam Deiparam", *PO* 19, 336–43 (218–25): 337 (219): Ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ πολλὰ παραπλήσια πάντες αὐτὴν κατὰ μέρος οἱ θεοφόροι προσφθέγγονται. Dated by Caro to 450–70.

shared by the homilies,[113] the salutations with the anaphora "through whom" (δι' ἧς) referring to redemption (1.6–7, 1.16–17, 7.16–17, 15.14–15, 23.14–15), and numerous epithets with participial construction (3.11, 3.14–17, 5.8–11, 9.8–15, 11.8–12, 13.8–9, 13.13, 13.17, 15.12–13, 17.8–9, 17.12–15, 19.12–13, 19.15, 21.8–9, 21.12–15), which the narration itself justifies—and the main themes of the narration are again those of the period of Ephesus. And as the praise of Cyril shows, it was natural to associate Mary with the whole realm of Christians' faith and life.

The salutations of the homilies are mainly in the setting of the Annunciation, within which the virginal conception and birth and virginity in differing aspects are described. The miracle of the virgin birth-giving provokes the question "how did it occur?" In Hesychius we find a set of seventeen πῶς questions, which at the same time present the Christological assertions of the period before the Nestorian polemic.[114] In the Akathistos the epithet "Hail to you, who taught nobody 'how' " (χαῖρε, τὸ "πῶς" μηδένα διδάξασα, 3.15) reflects the general issue, but the explanation of the miracle in strophe 13 may refer to the period of the controversy.[115] The Annunciation theme involves implicitly another theme which connects Mary to the *oikonomia*, the redemptive plan of God, in which Mary has the role of the Second Eve. Likewise that theme is to be found in the homilies and in the Akathistos.[116] But the homilies do not reflect only the theological discussion on Mary, for they

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[113] Caro (1971–3), 685: the Ark of the Testament, "ark gilded by the Spirit" (23.8); temple, "living temple" (23.2); tabernacle, "tabernacle of God and the Word" (23.6); throne, "chair of the king" (1.12); container of the uncontainable, "container of the uncontainable God" (15.6); lampstand, "torch full of light" (21.1), "lampstand of the light that never wanes" (21.7); ship, ""ship for those who wish to be saved" (17.16); cloud, "protection of the world, wider than a cloud" (11.13); ladder/bridge, "celestial ladder by which God descended" (3.10), "bridge leading those from earth to heaven" (3.11).

[114] E.g. Hom. 6, Aubineau (1978), 196–7; Hom. 4, *PG* 93.1456C: πῶς ἐν χρόνοις ὁ πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, πῶς ἡ τῆς μήτρας τὸν ἀχώρητον ἐχώρησε φύσις, πῶς γέγονε σάρξ, μὴ τραπεὶς ὁ ἀσώματος, πῶς ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος ἐν τῇ παρθενικῇ κενώσας ἑαυτὸν νηδύϊ πανεύφημος, πρὸς δούλου μορφὴν ἀρρητως ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐσαρκώθη ... πῶς ὁ ἄνω καὶ κάτω, πῶς ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς. "How did he who is before the ages [appear] in time? How did the nature of a womb contain the uncontainable? How did the bodiless one become flesh without change? How did God the Word, the all-blessed, emptying himself in the virgin womb, ineffably take on flesh from it in the form of a servant? . . . How did the one who is above [appear] also below? How [was] he in heaven and upon earth?" Aubineau (1978), 179 (translated): "The homily would be even earlier than the polemic begun by Nestorius." On its Christology see Aubineau (1978), 172–3. Caro dates the homily to 410–26.

[115] Cf. Hom. 5, Aubineau (1978), 158; *PG* 93.1461.

[116] E.g. Hom. 6, Aubineau (1978), 194; *PG* 93.1453.

exhibit also the notions of Mary which had developed during the boom of fourth-century asceticism.

The ideal of virginity associated with Mary, as it is presented by Gregory of Nyssa in his famous treatise *De Virginitate*, is found in a homily of Atticus of Constantinople. Gregory taught: "What happened in the stainless Mary when the fullness of the Godhead which was in Christ shone through her, that happens in every soul that follows the virgin life according to the word."[117] Atticus of Constantinople (sed. 406–25), the spiritual teacher of the imperial family, urged again:

> And you also, women, you have been renewed in Christ, who have cast off every stain of sin and have partaken of blessing in the most holy Mary. You also may receive him in the womb of faith, the one who is born today of the Virgin. For even the blessed Virgin Mary first opened herself through faith, and not until she had made her body worthy of the kingdom did she receive the king of the universe in her womb.[118]

It is probably correct to characterize early fifth-century Constantinople as the 'city of the virgins', because female asceticism had spread to every social class,[119] and because the Virgin had become an object of imitation, not only to unmarried women, but to married women, mothers and widows as well.[120] In spite of his excessive emphasis on the empress Pulcheria's personal motives for achieving her goals by means of her virginity, the basis of Holum's study is surely correct, that in that

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[117] *De Virginitate* II.2.18–27: Ὅπερ γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀμιάντῳ Μαρία γέγονε σωματικῶς, "τοῦ πληρώματος τῆς θεότητος" ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ διὰ τῆς παρθενίας ἐκλάμψαντος, τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ πάσης ψυχῆς κατὰ λόγον παρθενεούσης γίνεται. The idea that it is possible to give birth to Christ in one's own body by means of chastity exemplified by Mary is traceable back to Origen, cf. Grouzel (1989), 143: "The fecundity of the chaste is like that of Mary, Virgin and Mother, it begets Jesus in the soul. Jesus is born only in the one who is chaste and He grows all the more if the individual is virgin. With Jesus, all the virtues that are identified with Him grow in the soul."

[118] Translation Holum (1989), 139. Lebon (1933), 190: At vos quoque, mulieres, quae in Christo regeneratae estis et omnes impietatis sordes deposuistis, atque benedictionis sanctissimae Mariae participes factae estis, excipite, vos quoque, in utero fidei eum, qui hodie ex Virgine natus est; nam ipsa quoque sancta Virgo Maria, cum prius per fidem uterum dilatasset, postea in habitaculo excepit Regem mundi, cum membra sua regno digna reddidisset.

[119] The 'virgin' (παρθένος, a technical term) was an individual female ascetic, who had dedicated herself to God through a public promise to preserve her virginity. The female ascetics formed the order of virgins (τάγμα τῶν παρθένων), an institution which is attested already between the 370s and the 380s, cf. Elm (1996), 139–42, 158–9, 164–6, and on Constantinople 178–83. Cf. Gloke (1995), 173, 177–82.

[120] Giannarelli (1989), 233–46.

city there prevailed a climate of ascetical striving, which had held Mary as the paragon of virginity since the time of Gregory of Nazianzus, Archbishop of Constantinople (380–1). For he had taught: "Christ was born of a Virgin; practise virginity, women, in order to become mothers of Christ!"[121] This tradition is reflected also in Proclus's homily, which he delivered at the Marian festival, for the beginning reveals that its theme was chastity and that it concerned especially womankind: "What we celebrate today is the pride and glory of womankind, wrought in her who was at the same time mother and virgin."[122]

These instances from the authoritative theologians show that virginity was practised under the shadow of the pure birth-giving of Mary. As to the Akathistos, strophe 19 corresponds to that teaching: "For virgins and for all who flee to you you are a wall, O Virgin Theotokos; for the Maker of heaven and earth constructed you, undefiled, by dwelling in your womb" (19.1–5); "Hail, beginning of spiritual renewal" (19.8); "Hail, for you gave new birth to those conceived in shame" (19.10); "Hail, you who gave birth to the sower of purity" (19.13); "Hail, fair nursing-mother of virgins" (19.16). The Akathistos reflects the enthusiastic era of asceticism when virginity (παρθενία) was seen as a highest state of human life, likened to the life of angels: "Hail, you who show forth the life of the angels" (13.9). The hymn claims that the Virgin guides people to divine knowledge ("guides all to divine knowledge, illuminating the mind with brilliance", 21.4–5), which was the aim of spiritual exercise, as all great teachers of asceticism taught. There is no doubt that the Akathistos was written within an ascetical framework.

In her article, "Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became *Meter Theou*", I. Kalavrezou presents evidence from art history that "the qualities of Mary emphasized at the time (i.e. the period of Ephesus) were still primarily abstract or theological", that "Mary is still the Theotokos defined at the council, a concept".[123] This observation corresponds also to the descriptions of the homilies, which do not pre-

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[121] Or. 38, "In Nativitatem, vel In Theophania", *SC* 358, 38.1; *PG* 36.313A: Χριστὸς ἐκ Παρθένου· γυναῖκες παρθενεύετε, ἵνα Χριστοῦ γένησθε μητέρες.

[122] *ACO* I.1.1.103.5–7: ἁγνείας γὰρ ἔχει ὑπόθεσιν, καὶ τοῦ γένους τῶν γυναικῶν καύχημα τὸ τελούμενον καὶ δόξα τοῦ θήλεος διὰ τὴν ἐν καιρῷ μητέρα καὶ παρθένον. Cf. the interpretation of Holum (1989), 156, which I do not consider as a "complete explication", because Holum misses the spiritual ground of Proclus's thought. For the same reason, his claim that "the opening words of Proclus reveal Pulcheria's own view of the issue at stake" no doubt is an over-interpretation.

[123] Kalavrezou (1990), 166.

sent Mary as a personality. Where the word 'mother' (μήτηρ) appears it is only in contrast to the 'virgin' (παρθένος) as in Cyril's praise.[124] On the other hand, Giannarelli claims that already Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373), a great authority of the Church, who held Mary up as the ideal pattern for Christian virgins, had consciously created an ideal portrait of the mother of Jesus by specifying her characteristics.[125] What Athanasius in reality insisted on was that a Christian must acquire the Marian virtues (*humilitas, gravitas, prudentia, spes, verecundia*) regardless of her or his social or geographical position.[126]

Viewing the Akathistos on the basis of Kalavrezou and Giannarelli, the hymn seems to present a very early stage in the development of the cult of Mary. To begin with the word μήτηρ, 'mother', it appears three times: "Hail, mother of the lamb and the shepherd" (χαῖρε, ἀμνοῦ καὶ ποιμένος μήτηρ, 7.6), "Hail, mother of the star that never sets" (χαῖρε, ἀστέρος ἀδύτου μήτηρ,[127] 9.6), and "O Mother hymned by all" (ὦ πανύμνητε μήτηρ,[128] 24.1). From this it is clear that in verses 7.6 and 9.6 motherhood does not refer to the relationship between the mother and child, but to theological considerations, whereas 24.1 is a rhetorical exclamation. The antithesis Mother–Virgin appears explicitly in the central strophe: "Hail, you who bring opposites together" (15.12); "Hail, you who unite virginity and childbirth" (15.12–13), and is intended to emphasize the miracle of the virgin birth-giving. The question of Mary's lacking personality in the Akathistos will be discussed in the light of Proclus's descriptions of Mary in the section on "Proclus of Constantinople as a Marian Preacher". As far as the Marian virtues are concerned, physical and spiritual chastity is actually the only and dominating virtue the hymn presents (e.g. "Hail, liberation from miry deeds", 9.13), because passionlessness ("Hail, you who released us from the

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[124] Also in Proclus, e.g. *PG* 65.713AB; Constas (1994), 192/202: Εἰπέ μοι, παρθένε, τίς σε μητέρα πρὸ τῶν γάμον ἐποίησε; πῶς μήτηρ ἐγένου, καὶ παρθένος διέμεινας. "Tell me, virgin, who made you a mother before marriage? How did you become a mother and remain a virgin?"

[125] Giannarelli (1989), 243 n. 62. The properties: equilibrium of mind, attachment to good deeds, charity, compassion, extreme modesty, restraining of anger, absence of envy, humbleness etc.

[126] Cf. references in Giannarelli (1989), 243.

[127] Also in Hesychius, Hom. 6, Aubineau (1978), 158; *PG* 93.1461A: οὗτος αὐτὴν Μητέρα φωτὸς ἐπονομάζει. "He names her Mother of Light."

[128] Also in Theodotus of Ancyra, Hom. 4, "In Sanctam Deiparam et in Simeonem", *PG* 77.1409A: ἡ θεία καὶ πανύμνητος παρθενικὴ μήτηρ. "The divine and all-praised virgin mother."

flame of passions", 9.15) and temperance ("Hail, guide of the Persians to temperance", 9.16) are forms of chastity.

However, it may be supposed that Mary was considered also as a personality in the Constantinopolitan Marian cult, because we know that at the level of popular piety Mary had an intercessory role long before Ephesus.[129] For instance Gregory of Nazianzus tells about a virgin who prayed to Mary to assist her in her peril.[130] Kelly's comment, "Gregory relates it in an entirely matter-of-fact way, as if there were nothing extraordinary about it",[131] seems to be very much to the point. Another example indicates that a prayer was addressed to Mary on a public occasion, for at the end of a spurious homily attributed to Basil of Seleucia, the homilist pleads for the assistance of the Virgin to stop the doctrinal struggles.[132] The prayer addressed to Mary in the last strophe of the Akathistos may represent the oldest layer of her veneration. For the devotion to Mary arose within the cult of the martyrs or the saints (e.g. confessors, ascetics, virgins), and evidence for the belief in the intercessory power of martyrs and saints begins to accumulate in the third century.[133] Holy people, when they died, were 'high' and closer to God than they had been on earth,[134] but naturally nobody could be closer to God than Mary.[135] The Akathistos ends with the prayer which refers to the Last Judgement (24.5). This can be explained by referring both to the origins of Marian festival in the Commemoration of Mary, analogous to the commemorations of saints, and to the theme of the hymn. The feast for which the Akathistos was in all likelihood composed was the Nativity, of which the Commemoration of Mary was an integral

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[129] Cf. O'Carroll (1983), s.v. "Intercession, Mary's", and "Advocate". "Sub Tuum", the famous prayer to the Theotokos (cf. O'Carroll 1983, s.v. "Sub Tuum") hardly belongs to the third or fourth century. Föster (1995), 192, notes that palaeographical investigation indicates a sixth- or seventh-century date. Cf. O'Carroll (1983), s.v. "Sub Tuum".

[130] Or. 24, "In Laudem S. Martyris Cypriani", *SC* 284, 24.11; *PG* 35.1181. Dated to 379 by Söll (1989), 25.

[131] Kelly (1989), 498.

[132] Hom. 39, *PG* 85.425–52: 452AB: Ὦ παναγία Παρθένε ... ἄνωθεν ἡμᾶς ἵλεως ἐποπτεύουσα, νῦν μὲν διεξάγοις εἰρηνικῶς. "O all-holy Virgin ... looking over us propitiously from above, guide us peacefully now."

[133] Kelly (1989), 490.

[134] "On St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea", in McCauley (1988), 97–8: "Now he is in heaven, and there in our behalf, I am certain, he offers sacrifice and prays for the people. ... May you look down upon us from on high" (Σὺ δὲ ὑμᾶς ἐποπτεύοις ἄνωθεν, *PG* 36.604D).

[135] Cf. 'Basil of Seleucia', Hom. 39, *PG* 85.429B.

part. This link alone is sufficient to direct one's thoughts to the hour of death and eternal life. But since the theme of the hymn is the Incarnation, which implicitly involves the eschatological expectations of the second coming of Christ, the thought of the fearful events on Judgement Day makes the hymnographer turn to Mary, who through her intercession could defend the sinner facing the Righteous Judge.

On the basis of this survey of the veneration of Mary it can first be stated that in the Akathistos there is nothing incompatible with what the homilies present. On the contrary, there is clear evidence of the connection with the Council of Ephesus, both in a doctrinal expression "container of the uncontainable God" (χώρα ἀχωρήτου Θεοῦ) and in the formal manifestations (the praises with salutations). Secondly, neither the homilies nor the Akathistos describe Mary as a personality—to put it in the words of Kalavrezou: "Mary is still the Theotokos defined at the council, a concept". As to the cult of Mary, the feast which existed before Ephesus explains the structure and the original context of the hymn. It is indisputable that the Akathistos reflects the enthusiasm of the ascetical era when Mary's pure birth-giving was the context in which asceticism was practised, and the text refers to no other Marian virtues than chastity. Finally, the last strophe with the prayer to Mary represents the oldest layer of the cult of Mary, which did not originate in theological discourse but in the devotion paid to saints.

Soon after the Council of Ephesus churches to Mary were constructed in Constantinople,[136] and precious Marian relics were acquired.[137] This proves that the cult of Mary was strengthened rapidly. The Theo-

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[136] There were churches dedicated to Mary already before Ephesus (Joh. Ruf. Pler. 1, *PO* 8, 11–12, cited by Holum 1989: 143; Holum 1989: 157 n. 51, cf. Wellen 1960: 143). After the council, *c.* 439, the prefect of Constantinople, Cyrus Panopolis, dedicated a church to Mary, cf. Cameron (1981), 240. According to Cameron this dedication is not to be interpreted as a casual expression of piety: "Cyros cannot have been unaware of the controversy over the application of the title Theotokos" (ibid. 242). Holum gives credit to Pulcheria for having built the famous Constantinopolitan Marian churches: the Blakhernai, the Hodegoi and the Khalkoprateia (ibid. 142–3), but according the Byzantine historians, Pulcheria founded only the Blakhernai. The Khalkoprateia was probably built by the emperor Theodosius II together with Pulcheria (Wellen 1960: 143–4). Cf. Janin (1953), 169 (Blakhernai), 208 (Hodegoi), 246 (Khalkoprateia).

[137] In the Blakhernai was deposited the Virgin's robe, and in the Khalcoprateia another famous relic, the girdle of the Virgin, both Pulcheria's acquisitions. In the Hodegoi again there was an icon of Mary obtained by Empress Eudocia in Jerusalem (Holum 1989: 142–3). The acquisitions of relics and icons reflect interest in the person of Mary (Wellen 1960: 144).

tokos schism must have been of particular significance in the 'city of the virgins'. The crisis touched all levels of society and it left an enduring legacy in the Catholic Church—the Nestorian Church. It is not credible that such a deep crisis did not leave a trace in hymnography as it left concrete signs in the other manifestations of the veneration of Mary.

Homily 39 of 'Basil of Seleucia'

A spurious homily among the texts of Basil of Seleucia (d. after 458), Oratio 39 "In Sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem", is unanimously considered as a source of the Akathistos Hymn. The parallelism between the homily and the Akathistos is evident, and is demonstrated by Paul Maas in the excursus of his article "Das Kontakion", which deals with the influence of Basil on the poetry of Romanos.[138] But the parallelism displays only the interrelationship, and cannot be any proof that the Akathistos depends on the homily. Despite the fact that homiletics contributed to the development of the kontakion genre, the possibility that influence took place in the opposite direction, from hymnography to homilies, cannot be excluded.

Benedictus Marx refuted the authorship of Basil, and claimed that the homily is by Proclus.[139] According to him, it is not credible that "the longest and most devout Marian sermon of the fifth century" could be from a homilist who must have been under the influence of the Antiochian school.[140] Besides, we do not know of any other Marian homilies from him.[141] At the end of the homily there is a strong petition addressed to the listeners for putting an end to the mutual enmities to save the peace in the Church,[142] and the preacher pleads even with the

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[138] Maas (1910), 306 (translated): "To the many arguments that speak for a close relationship between Romanos and the author of the Akathistos a new one emerges: both expatiate the same oration of Basil of Seleucia. . . . For me it indicates all the more strongly that the Akathistos belongs to the sixth century."

[139] Marx (1940), 85–6. Marx (88–9) connects the Akathistos with his claim for Proclus's authorship, by suggesting that the poetical passage found at *PG* 85.448AB, which influenced both Romanos and the Akathistos, is without parallel among the works of Basil but can be matched word for word from other homilies of Proclus.

[140] Marx (1941), 334.

[141] Cf. Caro (1971–3), 300.

[142] *PG* 85.449C–452A: Πρὸ δὲ πάντων, τὸ σῶμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τηρήσωμεν ἄρρηκτον· τῆς ὁμονοίας τὸν πλοῦτον φυλάττοντες ἄσυλον. Μὴ πρὸς τὰς ἀλλήλους ἔχθρας ἀμυνόμενοι τὴν ὀρθὴν πίστιν ἐκδικεῖν προσποιούμεθα· ἐν εὐσεβείας σχήματι τὸ κακὸν παραρ-

Theotokos for her assistance.[143] So, it is obvious that the homily was delivered during some critical period of dogmatical strife. Marx dates the homily to the period before the Council of Ephesus, when, he thinks, Proclus, through a conciliatory position, could still expect to take personal advantage of Nestorius.[144] Many scholars share Marx's view,[145] but Roberto Caro does not consider the arguments of Marx convincing. He thinks that the homily may be by Basil, who could have delivered it before the Second Council of Ephesus of 449.[146] Manuscript tradition does not give support to Basil's authorship.[147] But J. M. Tevel, who made an inventory of all manuscripts of Homily 39, obviously considered it authentic, because he did not exclude it as spurious.[148]

Caro has analysed the theological content of the homily more thoroughly than Marx, but he cannot prove his thesis either,[149] for the homily has expressions, terms and emphases such as are found also in the authentic texts of Proclus.[150] The scriptural canon Proclus uses is that of the Antiochian school,[151] and his Christology, at least during his archiepiscopacy, has been seen as "a conscious and significant attempt to mediate between the rival positions of Alexandria and Antioch".[152] For this reason, when Caro supposes that the author, forced by the circumstances, had adjusted his Antiochian Christology to the Alexandrian tradition,[153] the opposite view, that Proclus had taken his critical

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τύοντες· μηδὲ λημάτων ἕνεκεν αἰσχρῶν, τῶν δογμάτων ἀποστῶμεν τῶν ὀρθρῶν, ἐπὶ ζημίᾳ κερδαίνοντες, καὶ καπηλεύοντες τὴν ἀλήθειαν. "Above all, let us watch over the unbroken body of the Church, keeping the wealth of its concord unplundered. Let us not pretend to be avenging the true faith in warding each other off as enemies, preparing evil under a show of piety. Nor for the sake of shameful purposes let us stand aloof from true teachings, making profit out of loss and cheating truth."

143 *PG* 85.452AB: Καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀγάπης ἑαυτοὺς περισφίγξαντες τοιαύτας τῇ Θεοτόκῳ φωνὰς προσενέγκωμεν· Ὦ παναγία Παρθένε ... ἄνωθεν ἡμᾶς ἵλεως ἐποπτεύουσα, νῦν μὲν διεξάγοις εἰρηνικῶς. "And squeezing each other with bonds of love let us raise these cries to the Theotokos: O all-holy Virgin ... looking over us propitiously from above, guide us peacefully now."

144 Marx (1940), 86–7.

145 Caro (1971–3), 285: J. Quasten, G. Godet, A. Kreuz, R. Laurentin, F. Diekamp.

146 Caro (1971–3), 288–91, 301–5. Caro argues that the question of the title of 'Theotokos' was at that time still relevant.

147 Marx (1940), 85.

148 Tevel (1990).

149 Caro (1971–3), 299.

150 Caro (1971–3), 292.

151 Bauer (1919), 137.

152 Constas (1994), 254, cf. Bauer (1919), 114–30: "Christologie und Mariologie".

153 Caro (1971–3), 292.

Antiochian assembly into consideration, is as justifiable, because, in the end, the clear terminological difference between Homily 39 and Proclus's homilies dwindles to a single expression which is not found in Proclus's texts: the Logos "puts on flesh" (περιβάλλεται σάρκα).[154] So, the two intertwining traditions reflecting the Christological debate form the actual problem of this homily. As regards this study, however, the question of which one was the author—if either of them—is not as important as to inspect whether the handling of the theme of the Theotokos in general corresponds to the Ephesian period.

The very first sentence makes it clear that the discourse will be an encomium to the holy Virgin and Theotokos.[155] The praise takes its origin "from above", from the heavenly powers above, from the light that God's *doxa* shines round about:

> Thence springs praise of the Theotokos, wherefore she is Theotokos and is so named. What topic is more sublime than she is? None that can be thought of between the divine and the human. For it is not easy to conceive and speak of God; rather, it is altogether impossible. Similarly the great mystery of the Theotokos is above both understanding and language.[156]

The great mystery of the Theotokos (τὸ μέγα τῆς θεοτόκου μυστήριον) is emphasized throughout the homily. In one of the following passages it is explained as consisting of a double miracle: the virgin birth-giving, and that "a real man" who "remained true God" was born of the Theotokos.[157] This mystery surpasses language and thought, and yields great power to the Theotokos, for which reason she is elevated above all the

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[154] *PG* 85.432C; 433B: τὸ τῆς σαρκὸς καταπέτασμα περιβαλλόμενος, "putting on the veil of flesh"; 440B: ὡς καὶ παθητὸν σῶμα περιβαλλόμενος, "as putting on a suffering body"; 445C: τὴν ὁμοούσιον ἐμοὶ σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος, "putting on flesh of one essence with me". Cf. Caro (1971–3), 293.

[155] *PG* 85.425C: μεγάλας τῶν ἐγκωμίων εὑρήσει τὰς ἀφορμάς, ὁ τὴν ἁγίαν Παρθένον καὶ Θεοτόκον ἀνυμνῶν. "He who praises the holy Virgin and Theotokos will find the beginnings of the encomia great."

[156] *PG* 85.429B: ἐκεῖθεν ἄρξασθαι τῇ Θεοτόκῳ τῆς εὐφημίας, ὅθεν καὶ Θεοτόκος ἐστί τε καὶ λέγεται. Ἆρα τίς ἐστι ταύτης ὑψηλοτέρα ὑπόθεσις; Οὔμενουν εἴποι τις ἂν θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων τὸ μέσον ἐννοῶν. Ὡς γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν εὔκολον νοεῖν τε καὶ φράζειν Θεόν, μᾶλλον δὲ καθάπαξ ἀδύνατον· οὕτως τὸ μέγα τῆς θεοτόκου μυστήριον καὶ διανοίας καὶ γλώττης ἐστὶν ἀνώτερον.

[157] *PG* 85.436AB: ... μυστηρίου μεγάλου ... ὅτι καὶ μήτηρ γέγονας, καὶ παρθένος ἔμεινας· ὥσπερ ὁ τεχθεὶς ἐκ σοῦ ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν ἀψευδὴς καὶ Θεὸς ἔμεινεν ἀληθῶς. "... of the great mystery ... that you have become a mother and remained a virgin; since he who was born of you became a real man and remained true God."

saints, apostles and martyrs.[158] Through the Theotokos people are deemed worthy of great virtues (ἀγαθῶν).[159] Interestingly, there is also a definition: "since God became incarnate from her, she is called the Theotokos".[160] And one question implies that she is the birth-giver of the Logos.[161] It is clear that the homilist stresses the word 'Theotokos': altogether it appears nine times.[162]

The text includes an Annunciation scene with a dialogue between Gabriel and Mary and a monologue of Mary.[163] The four salutations (χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη) of the angel assert the position of Mary in the salvatory plan of God. The first salutation is from Luke 1.28.[164] The second salutation is addressed to her through whom the curse pronounced by God after the Fall will be done away with, and "all will be presented with hope for resurrection"[165]—the addressee is the antitype of Eve, Mary as the Second Eve. The third salutation, too, is associated with the Second Eve; the Virgin is the unwithered Paradise of chastity, in which "the tree of life produced fruits of salvation to all".[166] The fourth is a summary of the idea of the Second Eve: "mediating between God and humans" (μεσιτεύουσα Θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις), "that the parti-

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158 *PG* 85.448B: Εἴδετε πηλίκον δι' αὐτῆς ἐπράχθη μυστήριον, πᾶσαν ὑπερβαῖνον καὶ γλῶτταν καὶ ἔννοιαν. Τίς οὖν οὐκ ἂν θαυμάσειε τὴν μεγάλην τῆς θεοτόκου δύναμιν· καὶ ὅσον ὑπερανέχει τοὺς ὅσους τιμῶμεν ἁγίους; "Know what a great mystery has been worked through her, which surpasses every tongue and mind. Who then could not marvel at the great power of the Theotokos, and how much she excels those we greatly honour as saints." Cf. 441C, 449A.

159 *PG* 85.441C.

160 *PG* 85.429B: Ἐπεὶ οὖν Θεὸν σαρκωθέντα τεκοῦσα Θεοτόκος ὀνομάζεται, cf. 437D: ὁ δὲ πάντα πληρῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, καὶ σαρκούμενος ἐν αὐτῇ, τῆς ἐν οὐρανοῖς προσκυνήσεως οὐ χωρίζεται, "the Word of God filling all things even when taking flesh in her is not separated from worship in heaven".

161 *PG* 85.436B: πῶς ἔτεκες σαρκωθέντα τὸν Λόγον; "How did you give birth to the incarnate Word?"

162 Cf. Marx (1940), 86.

163 *PG* 85.444A–448B.

164 *PG* 85.444A: χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ. "Hail, favoured one, the Lord is with you."

165 *PG* 85.444A: χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη ... ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἡ πάντων τεχθήσεται χαρὰ καὶ παύσει τούτων τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἀράν, ἐν τῷ καταλύειν τοῦ θανάτου τὸ κράτος, καὶ δωρεῖσθαι πᾶσιν ἀναστάσεως ἐλπίδα. "Hail favoured one . . . for from you will be born the joy of all, and he will put an end to their ancient curse by destroying the power of death, and the hope of resurrections will be given to all."

166 *PG* 85.444A: χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ ἀμάραντος τῆς ἁγνείας παράδεισος, ἐν ᾧ φυτευθὲν τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς βλαστήσει πᾶσι σωτηρίαν καρποὺς. "Hail, favoured one, the unfading Paradise of chastity, in which the tree of life was planted and will burgeon with the fruits of salvation for all." ("The tree of life" refers to the cross.)

tion-wall of the enmity might be destroyed and those in heaven united to those on earth".[167] The salutations end with the phrase "the Lord is with you" (ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ), which is given the interpretation that Mary is a temple of the great high priest.[168]

The Annunciation scene has been constructed on the basis of the Gospel of Luke, but it includes also an imaginative dialogue with the typical question of the Ephesian period, how the womb can contain God who is uncircumscribed.[169] After the scene of Annunciation there comes a Christological passage[170] in which the mystery of the union of divinity and humanity is stressed, and the most important soteriological assertion is declared: "For the one born was not merely human but God the Logos, made incarnate of a virgin and assuming flesh of the same essence (*homoousios*) as me, so that he might save like by means of like."[171] The next passage is the monologue of Mary who is talking to the child in her arms.[172] At the end of the homily the preacher is pondering the

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[167] *PG* 85.444A: χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη, μεσιτεύουσα Θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἵνα τὸ μεσότοιχον ἀναιρεθῇ τῆς ἔχθρας, καὶ τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἑνωθῇ τὰ ἐπίγεια. "Hail, favoured one, the mediator between God and humans so that the dividing wall of enmity was razed and the things of earth united with the things of heaven."

[168] *PG* 85.444B: Ἐπειδὴ ναὸς ὑπάρχεις ὄντως ἀξιόθεος τοῖς τῆς ἁγνείας ἀρώμασιν εὐωδιαζόμενος, ὁ μέγας ἐν σοὶ κατοικήσει ἀρχιερεὺς, ὁ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ, ἀμήτωρ καὶ ἀπάτωρ· ἀμήτωρ ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρός· ἀπάτωρ ἐκ σοῦ τῆς μητρός. "Since you are a temple truly worthy of God, perfumed by the fragrance of chastity, the great high priest according to the order of Melchizedek will dwell in you, he who is motherless and fatherless: motherless as from God the Father, fatherless as from you his mother." Proclus cries out, in his famous sermon, Hom. 1, *ACO* I.1.1.104.15–16: ὦ ναὸς ἐν ᾧ ὁ θεὸς γέγονεν ἱερεύς, οὐ τὴν φύσιν μεταβαλών, ἀλλὰ τὸν κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ δι' οἶκτον ἐνδυσάμενος. "O temple in which God became a priest, not changing his nature, but dressing himself in the order of Melchizedek through pity." The antithesis motherless–fatherless (ἀμήτωρ–ἀπάτωρ) is typical of Proclus, cf. *ACO* I.1.1.104.24–7.

[169] *PG* 85.444D: μὴ γὰρ ἔχεις οὐρανοῦ πλατητέραν γαστέρα; "For do you not have a womb wider than the heavens?"; 445A: Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ τοιαύτη δύναμις [sc. Ὑψίστου] ἐπισκιάσῃ σοι, οὐ δυνήσῃ χωρεῖν τὸν ἀχώρητον; "For if such power [of the Highest] did not overshadow you, you would not be able to contain the uncontainable."

[170] *PG* 85.445B: Πῶς ἡ ἄκτιστος καὶ ἀχώρητος οὐσία τοῦ Λόγου καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀκοινώνητος κτίσιν, ᾗ προσβλέψαι τὰ Χερουβὶμ οὐ τολμᾷ ... αὕτη κοινωνίαν ἡσπάσατο πρὸς τὴν ἀσθενῆ καὶ γεώδη τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος φύσιν; "How did the uncreated and uncontained essence of the Word, not partaking in any created matter and at which the Cherubim dare not glance ... afford him a partaking in the weak and earthly nature of humanity?"

[171] *PG* 85.445C: Οὐ γὰρ ἦν ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος ὁ τεχθείς· ἀλλὰ Θεὸς Λόγος ἐκ παρθένου σαρκωθείς, τὴν ὁμοούσιον ἐμοὶ σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος, ἵνα τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνασώσηται.

[172] *PG* 85.448AB.

significance of the Theotokos. He asks and defines what kind of vessel the Theotokos is. This kind of metaphor, the Theotokos as a vessel or an implement of some kind in which the Incarnation takes place, is popular in the homilies of the context of Ephesus, indicating the divine and human relationship of Christ. But here the vessel refers to salvation, not only to the nature of Christ.[173] The homily ends with a prayer in which the preacher begs that at the Last Judgement the holy Virgin will show those who are to be taken up to heaven their place among those who may sit on the right side of the throne.

The homilist's position toward the Theotokos is one of honour, and he doubts his ability to express the matter in question with due respect.[174] This attitude, even if a rhetorical commonplace found frequently in Proclus,[175] does not really fit with his image as a Marian praiser, for in this respect he shows no restraint, as the encomiastic passages of Homilies 1, 3, 4 and 5 demonstrate. Proclus prefers the word Virgin and the combination of Virgin–Mother, indeed, he seldom uses the word 'Theotokos'. Such a straightforward appeal to Mary as is found at the end is unknown in Proclus's homilies. Notwithstanding, by these remarks one cannot refute the possible authorship of Proclus which Marx is so sure of. But Marx's theory that this homily dates from the period before Ephesus is not credible, for the term 'Theotokos' seems to bear the meaning which was established at Ephesus.[176] On the other hand, the observation of Fletcher that the Annunciation theme after Ephesus was dealt with more extensively than before the council also supports my notion that the homily was delivered after Ephesus.[177] In addition to this, dealing with the word 'vessel' with the emphasis on salvation of men suggests a later stage than the time of the acute Theotokos crisis.

The image of the Theotokos is, in this as in all authentic homilies of the period of Ephesus, quite flat. That high entity, who is above the

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[173] *PG* 85.449B: πηλίκον ἂν εἴη σκεῦος ἡ Θεοτόκος; οὐ κατὰ τὴν χρυσῆν στάμνον τὸ μάννα χωρήσασα, ἀλλὰ τὸν οὐρανίον ἄρτον ἐν γαστρὶ χωρήσασα, τὸν εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ ῥῶσιν τοῖς πιστοῖς διδόμενον. "How great a vessel might the Theotokos be? Not as having contained the manna in the measure of a golden vase, but as having contained in her womb the heavenly bread, given to the faithful for nourishment and encouragement."

[174] *PG* 85.436AB, 452A.

[175] Cf. Constas (1994), 171 n. 23; Marx (1940), 86.

[176] *PG* 85.429B: ἐπεὶ οὖν Θεὸν σαρκωθέντα τεκοῦσα Θεοτόκος ὀνομάζεται, "since having given birth to the incarnate God she is called Theotokos"; 436B: πῶς ἔτεκες σαρκωθέντα τὸν Λόγον; "How did you give birth to the incarnate Word?"

[177] Cf. Fletcher (1958), 61–2.

apostles and martyrs, is given no individual properties—with two exceptions. These exceptions are included in the Annunciation scene and the monologue of Mary. And there we find the parallels to the Akathistos.[178]

In the Annunciation scene there are some other expressions which affirm the virtual relationship between the text of the homily and the Akathistos. Besides the known parallel[179] there is a similar salutation,[180] a metaphor of the temple,[181] and the 'container' epithet.[182] It is worth mentioning that the word ἀνύμφευτος appears only in this passage.[183] A careful inspection shows that the parallel differs rhythmically from its closest surroundings,[184] and the metaphor of the temple is 'more poetical' than in the Akathistos. In the analysis of the monologue of Mary, which ends with the parallel to the Akathistos, "You resided wholly among those below, yet were wholly not absent from those above; for the descent did not take place according to place, but a divine con-

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178 *PG* 85.444C / Ak. 2.3–4; 448B / Ak. 15.4.

179 *PG* 85.444C: τὸ παράδοξον τῆς σῆς ἐπαγγελίας, δυσπαράδεκτον ἔχει πληροφορίαν. "The paradox of your annunciation holds an assurance hard to accept." / Ak. 2.3–4: Τὸ παράδοξόν σου τῆς φωνῆς δυσπαράδεκτόν μου τῇ ψυχῇ φαίνεται. "The paradox of your words I find hard for my soul to accept."

180 *PG* 85.444A: χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη. . . . Ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἡ πάντων τεχθήσεται χαρὰ, καὶ παύσει τούτων τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἀράν. "Hail, favoured one. . . . For from you will be born the joy of all, and he will put an end to the ancient curse." / Ak. 1.6–7: Χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἡ χαρὰ ἐκλάμψει· χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἡ ἀρὰ ἐκλείψει. "Hail, through whom joy shall shine forth; hail, through whom the curse shall cease."

181 *PG* 85.444B: Ἐπειδὴ ναὸς ὑπάρχεις ὄντως ἀξιόθεος τοῖς τῆς ἁγνείας ἀρώμασιν εὐωδιαζόμενος, ὁ μέγας ἐν σοὶ κατοικήσει ἀρχιερεύς "Since you are a temple truly worthy of God, perfumed by the fragrance of chastity, the great high priest will dwell in you." / Ak. 23.1–5: Ψάλλοντές σου τὸν τόκον εὐφημοῦμεν σε πάντες ὡς ἔμψυχον ναόν, θεοτόκε·ἐν τῇ σῇ γὰρ οἰκήσας γαστρὶ ὁ κατέχων πάντα τῇ χειρὶ κύριος ἡγίασεν, ἐδόξασεν. "As we sing in honour of your giving birth, we all praise you as a living temple, O Theotokos. For the Lord who holds all in his hands dwelt in your womb and made you holy, made you glorious."

182 *PG* 85.445A: Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ τοιαύτη δύναμις ἐπισκιάσῃ σοι, οὐ δυνήσῃ χωρεῖν τὸν ἀχώρητον; "For if such power [of the Highest] did not overshadow you, you would not be able to contain the uncontainable." / Ak. 15.6: Χαῖρε, θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου χώρα. "Hail, container of the uncontainable God."

183 *PG* 85.445B: Τίς λόγος τὸ ἀδιάβατον τῆς ἀνυμφεύτου λοχείας πέλαγος ἐμβατεῦσαι δυνήσεται; "What argument will be able to embark upon the untraversable ocean of the unwedded childbirth?" / Refrain of the Akathistos, χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε. "Hail, bride unwedded."

184 *PG* 85.444C: πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο δυνατόν; Τὸ παράδοξον τῆς σῆς ἐπαγγελίας δυσπαράδεκτον ἔχει πληροφορίαν. Πῶς ἡ ἄσπορος βλαστήσω καρπόν; πῶς δὲ ἡ ἄγαμος γεννήσω υἱόν; "How will this be possible? The paradox of your annunciation holds an assurance hard to accept. How will the seedless one sprout a fruit? How will the unwedded conceive a son?"

descension was carried out",[185] an interesting issue becomes evident. Mary is talking to her baby whom she is watching with fear and desire (φόβοις καὶ πόθοις)—as the homilist imagines. Mary's speech takes place 'here and now' up to the parallel, in which the tense diverges from the proceeding speech: "Heaven is your throne but I carry you in my arms. You *were* complete among those who are from below, but you *did not leave* those from on high." This unmotivated retrospective leap can be given any logical explanation other than that it is a citation. My impression of the above mentioned passages is that the author has made a synthesis of the Gospel and the Akathistos Hymn.

The difficult question of the mutual influence can now be approached by asking whether the passages 444A–445B[186] and 448AB,[187] between which is found the Christologically important passage, are original. For, if they are separated from the 'body' of the homily, its look becomes more consistent, and at the same time it becomes "more like a homily of Basil than of Proclus".[188] Further, it can be seen that the monologue does not give occasion for the succeeding passage which emphasizes the mystery and power of the Theotokos. Ideologically, this passage is better linked with the passage preceding the monologue. If there is an interpolation, it could have been made for the Annunciation feast, to which the title of the homily refers ("On the Annunciation of the All-Holy Theotokos", εἰς τὸν εὐαγγελισμὸν τῆς παναγίας Θεοτόκου). On the other hand again, it is precisely Basil who is known for such imaginative discussions and 'theatrical elements', and he uses similar rhetoric and technique as in Homily 39. An explanation for those passages could be the general tendency after Ephesus to extend the theme of the Annunciation. As regards the Ephesian period, there are no themes or terms in the homily which had not appeared in the

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[185] *PG* 85.448B: Ὅλος τοῖς κάτω ἐπέστης, καὶ οὐδ' ὅλως ἄνω ἀπέστης· οὐ γὰρ τοπικὴ γέγονεν ἡ κατάβασις, ἀλλὰ θεϊκὴ πέπρακται συγκατάβασις. Ak. 15.1–4: Ὅλος ἦν ἐν τοῖς κάτω καὶ τῶν ἄνω οὐδ' ὅλως ἀπῆν ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος συγκατάβασις γὰρ θεϊκή, οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε. "The uncircumscribed Word was present wholly among those below, yet in no way absent from those above. For a divine condescension occurred, not a descent according to place."

[186] From *PG* 85.444A (καὶ φαιδρύνεται Γαβριήλ) to 445B (τῶν ζητουμένων τὴν εὕρεσιν).

[187] From *PG* 85.448A (Ἅπερ ἅπαντα ἡ ἁγία Μήτηρ τοῦ Κυρίου) to 448B (ὑμνῶ σου τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν, οὐκ ἐρευνῶ σου τὴν οἰκονομίαν).

[188] Pauline Allen's comment (11.6.1998, Brisbane).

context of Ephesus, for which reason one can agree with the dating by Caro, that is, before 449.

Unlike Paul Maas, I see the influence of the Akathistos in the homily. I do not consider it credible that the author of the masterly, intellectual and spiritual unity of which the Akathistos Hymn consists had taken a casual passage, unmotivated in its own context, as one of the main theses (15.1–4) of his work. My impression is that the homilist is not Proclus. A clarification of whether Basil of Seleucia is the author of this homily,[189] and a literal analysis of the homily itself, will throw light on the relationship between the homily and the hymn.

Christology

The main Christological statements of the Akathistos Hymn are found in two strophes, in Prooemium I, the theological argument of the hymn,[190] and in the central strophe 15. The basic idea, "the Word became flesh—taking on the form of a servant", is demonstrated in these strophes:

> Ὁ κλίνας τῇ καταβάσει τοὺς οὐρανοὺς
> χωρεῖται ἀναλλοιώτως ὅλος ἐν σοί·
> ὃν καὶ βλέπων ἐν μήτρᾳ σου λαβόντα δούλου μορφὴν.

> He who bowed the heavens and came down
> is contained unchanged but whole in you.
> I see him take the form of a servant in your womb.

> Ὅλος ἦν ἐν τοῖς κάτω καὶ τῶν ἄνω οὐδ' ὅλως
> ἀπῆν ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος·
> συγκατάβασις γὰρ θεϊκή,
> οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε
> καὶ τόκος ἐκ παρθένου θεολήπτου.

> The uncircumscribed Word was present wholly among those below,
> yet in no way absent from those above.
> For a divine condescension occurred
> —not a descent according to place—
> and a birth from the Virgin, seized by God.

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189 Cf. Martzelos (1991), 93–116.
190 Krypiakiewicz (1909), 363–4.

The subject of the Incarnation is the uncircumscribed Logos, explicitly expressed in strophe 15.[191] In the prooemium the Logos is presented as God through the reference to Psalm 17[192] as well as through the word 'whole' (ὅλος),[193] which is a predicate adjective of the Logos in 15.1. The word ὅλος, connoting both God and human being, most probably refers to the First Council of Constantinople of 381, which condemned various heresies, which held that the divinity was divided into several natures.[194] The juxtaposition of 'above' and 'below' (ἄνω and κάτω) reflects both indivisibility and consubstantiality, an obvious trinitarian position. In the two strophes the manner of the Incarnation is described respectively as a descent (κατάβασις), and a condescension (συγκατάβασις),[195] the latter an expression preferred by Alexandrian theologians. In addition, the prooemium particularly emphasizes that God becomes human without

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[191] Lampe (1961): "ἀπερίγραπτος, *uncircumscribed, infinite*; of God; of Logos, esp. of divine nature of Christ, e.g. Proclus, *Tomus ad Armenios*, *ACO* IV.2.189.27."

[192] Ps. 17.10 (*NRSV* 18.9): καὶ ἔκλινεν οὐρανὸν καὶ κατέβη. "He bowed the heavens and came down" (in reference to God, 17:7); cf. Ps. 143.5.

[193] Lampe (1961): "ὅλος, *whole, entire*, ref. persons of Trin.; theol. *whole, complete*, being in its entirety, is the peculiarity of God; God is not divided; ref. relationship between Father and Son; Christol."

[194] Tanner (1990), 28: Καὶ τὸν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως δὲ τοῦ κυρίου λόγον ἀδιάστροφον σῴζομεν, οὔτε ἄψυχον οὔτε ἄνουν ἢ ἀτελῆ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς οἰκονομίαν παραδεχόμενοι, ὅλον δὲ εἰδότες τέλειον μὲν πρὸ αἰώνων ὄντα Θεὸν Λόγον, τέλειον δὲ ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν γενόμενον. "And we preserve undistorted the word of the Lord's Incarnation, accepting him as neither spiritless nor soulless nor imperfect as regards the divine plan for the flesh, but acknowledging the whole perfect Word who is God before the ages, and who became perfect man in the last days for our salvation." Cf. Krypiakiewicz (1909), 365–6, who argues that the word refers to the Christology of Gregory of Nazianzus.

[195] Cf. Lampe (1961): "συγκατάβασις, ἡ, *descent*, 3.e. on part of God, *accommodation, concession* to human limitations, 4. *condescencion of God*, 4.b. partic. in rel. to Inc. in which connexion the idea of *descent* usu. also present." The English word 'condescension', which is used in the sense of someone lowering himself to do something which he would not normally deign to, comes close to the idea of συγκατάβασις. E.g. the sermon of Pseudo-Athanasius "In Censum sive Descriptionem Sanctae Mariae et in Josephum", *PG* 28.945B: Τίς μὴ θαυμάσῃ τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου συγκατάβασιν; Ἄνω ἐλεύθερος καὶ κάτω ἐναπόγραφος· ἄνω Υἱὸς καὶ κάτω δοῦλος· ἄνω βασιλεὺς καὶ κάτω μισθωτός· ἄνω πλούσιος καὶ κάτω ἐνδεής· ἄνω προσκυνούμενος καὶ κάτω φορολογούμενος· ἄνω θεϊκὸς θρόνος καὶ κάτω ἀγροικικὸν σπήλαιον· ἄνω ὁ πατρῷος καὶ ἀκατάληπτος κόλπος καὶ κάτω ἀλογοτροφεῖον μικρὸν καὶ φάτνιον. "Who could not wonder at the Lord's condescension? Free above and circumscribed below; the Son above and a slave below; a king above and despised below; rich above and needy below; worshipped above and taxed below; a divine throne above and a rustic cave below; the fatherly and limitless embrace above and below the small stable and manger." A good exposition of the use of the term is to be found in de Margerie (1993), esp. 191–9.

change (ἀναλλοιώτως).[196] In strophe 15 it is affirmed that condescension is by no means a movement from one place to another. The parallel of 15.1–4 was discussed in the previous chapter.[197]

These two passages introduce Mary as "not knowing wedlock" (ἀπειρόγαμος) and as "virgin seized by god" (παρθένος θεόληπτος);[198] she is called the Virgin ten times altogether (Παρθένος 3.1, 5.1, 9.2, 15.5, 17.4, 19.1, 21.2; ἀπειρόγαμος, Pr. 3, 4.2; ἄγαμος, 6.3). Nevertheless, she is the Theotokos, for it is her title in six strophes (1.2, 5.5, 11.5, 17.2, 19.1, 23.2). But in the last strophe, her status is articulated as "you who gave birth to the Word, the holiest of all holies" (24.1–2). So, in the hymn, from a dogmatic point of view, she is the Logos-bearer; her womb received God (5.1), and she is greeted as the tabernacle of God the Logos (23.6).

In view of the dating hypothesis, a comparison of the Christology of the hymn with the definition of faith of the Council of Chalcedon is necessary. The *definitio fidei* runs as follows:

> Ἑπόμενοι τοίνυν τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν, ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκομεν, τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι, Θεὸν ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν κύριον μονογενῆ, ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως ἀτρέπτως ἀδιαιρέτως ἀχωρίστως γνωρίζομενον, οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνῃρημένης διὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν, σῳζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ἰδιότητος ἑκατέρας φύσεως καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον

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[196] Lampe (1961): "ἀναλλοιώτως, *without change*, of Logos, esp. in connexion with Inc. *as not incurring change*."

[197] 'Basil of Seleucia', Hom. 39, *PG* 85.448B: "Ὅλος τοῖς κάτω ἐπέστης, καὶ οὐδ' ὅλως τῶν ἄνω ἀπέστης· οὐ γὰρ τοπικὴ γέγονεν ἡ κατάβασις, ἀλλὰ θεϊκὴ πέπρακται συγκατάβασις. "You resided wholly among those below, yet were wholly not absent from those above; for the descent did not take place according to place, but a divine condescension was carried out." In the larger homily context (445B–448B) this passage is linked with the mystery, which emerged when the uncreated and uncontainable *ousia* of the Logos touched the weak and early human nature to make redemption possible.

[198] Lampe (1961): "ἀπειρόγαμος, *without experience of marriage, virgin*." *TLG*: e.g. Athanasius, Didymus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Proclus *PG* 65.712C. Lampe (1961): "θεόληπτος, *chosen by God*." Liddell and Scott (1968): "ἄγαμος, *unmarried, unwedded, single*."

καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης, οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρουμένον, ἀλλ' ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν μονογενῆ Θεὸν λόγον κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, καθάπερ ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐξεπαίδευσεν καὶ τὸ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε σύμβολον.[199]

Following the holy Fathers therefore with one voice we all firmly teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same son, perfect in godhead and perfect in humanity, truly God and truly man with rational soul and body, of one essence with the Father according to godhead and of one essence with us according to humanity, like us in everything except sin, begotten in his godhead of the Father before the ages, but in the last days for us and for our salvation [he was begotten] in his humanity of Mary the Virgin, the Birth-giver of God (Theotokos); we recognize one and the same Christ, the Lord, the only-begotten son, in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, without the difference between the natures being in any way removed through the union, but rather with the distinctness of each nature being preserved and gathered together into one person (*prosopon*) and one hypostasis, not divided into or shared between two individuals, but one and the same son, the only-begotten God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from of old [have spoken] of him and Jesus Christ himself has taught us and as the tradition of the Fathers has indicated to us.

In the hymn overall, the titles and attributes describing Christ's divine, royal or heavenly origin form the majority of the references to Christ.[200] The reason for such an emphasis is the hymn's declaration of the birth of God the Logos. The expressions used in connection with the 'becoming flesh' are: "when he saw you taking on a body" (σωματούμενόν σε θεωρῶν, 1.4), "Christ's appearance in the flesh" (τὴν ἔνσαρκον Χριστοῦ παρουσίαν, 7.2), "pastured in Mary's womb" (ἐν γαστρὶ Μαρίας βοσκήθεντα, 7.5), "strange birth" (ξένον τόκον, 14.1), "birth from the Virgin" (τόκος ἐκ παρθένου, 15.5), "the great work of your Incarnation" (τῆς σῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως ἔργον, 16.2), and "came to dwell" (ἐπεδήμησε,[201] 22.3). Christ's humanity, emphasized in his taking the form

[199] *ACO* II.1.2.129–30.

[200] See Index.

[201] Lampe (1961): "ἐπιδημέω, B. *come to reside in* a place 2. of Inc. C. *dwell* among or with, 2. esp. of Inc. E. abs. *appear*, 2. esp. ref. Inc. 3. ref. mode of Inc.; ἐπιδημία, 3. of Christ, a. of Inc. either as *coming* or *dwelling*." Constas (1994), 142 n. 25: "ἐπιδημία was a common Alexandrian word for the incarnation, birth, and earthly sojourn of the Word in the flesh. 'He took his place among us' = ἐπεδήμησεν; cf. Proclus, Hom. 17.1. 'Laudatio S. Stephani', *PG* 65.809A." Cf. 'Basil of Seleucia', Hom. 39, *PG* 85.440B: ἐδεήθημεν ἐπιδημίας Θεοῦ, ibid. 434C: ἕως ὁ μέγας ἐπεδήμησεν ἰατρός.

of a servant, is contrasted with his divinity in the following antitheses: infant—perfect God (βρέφος—Θεὸς τέλειος, 12.3–4), High One—humble man (ὁ ὑψηλός—ταπεινὸς ἄνθρωπος, 14.3–4), God whom none can approach—a human approachable by all (τὸν ἀπρόσιτον ὡς Θεόν—πᾶσι προσιτὸν ἄνθρωπον, 16.3–4). The soteriologically significant strophe 18 asserts humanity's salvation through Christ's humanity:[202]

> Σῶσαι θέλων τὸν κόσμον ὁ τῶν ὅλων κοσμήτωρ
> πρὸς τοῦτον αὐτεπάγγελτος ἦλθε·
> καὶ ποιμὴν ὑπάρχων ὡς θεὸς
> δι' ἡμᾶς ἐφάνη καθ' ἡμᾶς ὅμοιος·[203]
> ὁμοίῳ γὰρ τὸ ὅμοιον καλέσας ὡς θεὸς ἀκούει·
> Ἀλληλούϊα.
>
> Wishing to save the world, the Maker of all things
> came to it of his own free choice.
> And because as God he is our shepherd,
> he appeared for us, among us, like us;
> and calling like by means of like, as God he hears:
> "Alleluia."

With good reason one could suppose that this strophe is based on the formula of Chalcedon. It cannot, however, be proved, for "of one essence with us in humanity" (ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα) appears already in the *formula reunionis* of 433,[204] as well as in Homily 39 of 'Basil of Seleucia' ("But God the Word took flesh of the Virgin, putting on flesh of one essence with me, so that he might save like by means of like", ἀλλὰ Θεὸς Λόγος ἐκ Παρθένου σαρκωθείς, τὴν ὁμοούσιον ἐμοὶ σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος, ἵνα τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνασώσηται).[205]

It is important to notice that strophes 14, 16, 18 and 20 together encompass the idea of Philippians 2.6–9,[206] where the concept of 'salva-

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[202] Meyendorff (1975), 14: "Doctrinal conflicts between the various theologies from the fourth to the sixth century cannot be understood until their soteriological aspects are taken into consideration."

[203] Lampe (1961): "ὅμοιος, *like*, A. denied of God in rel. to creatures; ref. Son.; B. Christol., of Christ's human nature in rel. to mankind in gen.; C. Trin. in 4th-cent. controversy, ref. Son in rel. to Father."

[204] *CO* I.1.4.9.1; Tanner (1990), 70.

[205] *PG* 85.445C.

[206] Phil. 2.5–9: Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ, ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,

tion through the likeness' originates. In the statement of Chalcedon the term 'Theotokos', as a part of the definition of the nature of Christ, has been located in a context which proclaims the humanity of Christ. But in the Akathistos Hymn we do not find this idea or its corresponding reasoning. In strophes 13, 15, 17, 19 and 21, around the Philippian *locus*, Mary is depicted exclusively as the Virgin who gives birth to God. She is considered as the Theotokos, because the birth is 'beyond nature', so to say. Nevertheless, the birth according to humanity (κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα) is not excluded, since "of the Virgin" (ἐκ παρθένου) implies human nature, and the Incarnation is repeatedly said to have taken place in the womb. But what is stressed is significant, and here the *how* of the description matters. Since the hymn is so long, the differentiation is not easy. Anyhow, it is evident that in the Akathistos Hymn the use of the word 'Theotokos' reflects the emphasis on the *theo-* of *Theo*tokos.

The hymn declares that the salvation of humankind is founded on the Incarnation of God, who "appeared for us, among us, like us" (18.4), "calling like by means of like" (18.5). This famous idea, characteristic of the Christology of Athanasius of Alexandria,[207] was known so long before Chalcedon that it proves only its relevance to a soteriological context. It is found also in Homily 39[208] and in Proclus's *Tomus ad Armenios de Fide* of 435 ("Therefore God the Word became perfect man . . . and becoming human he saves by means of like suffering the race with which he is one according to the flesh").[209]

We can see that in the definition of faith the unity of Christ's person is expressed in the periphrasis "one and the same" (εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτός), and moreover that a series of titles of Christ is repeated three times and that "the Son" is emphasized, assuming first place in the formula "our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same son . . . one and the same Christ, the Lord, the only-begotten son . . . one and the same son, the only-begotten God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ" (ἕνα καὶ τὸν

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did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ["slave" in *NRSV*], being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross."

[207] *De Incarnatione* 54, cited by Young (1983), 83: "He became human that we might be deified; he revealed himself in a body so that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father." Cf. Kelly (1989), 284.

[208] *PG* 85.445C, quoted above.

[209] *ACO* 3.2.190.16–19: ἐγένετο τοίνυν ὁ Θεὸς λόγος τέλειος ἄνθρωπος ... καὶ γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος, σῴζει τῷ ὁμοιοπαθεῖ τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ὁμόφυλον γένος.

αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ... ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν κύριον μονογενῆ ... ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν μονογενῆ Θεὸν λόγον κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν). In the Akathistos Hymn the 'one and the same' indicating the unity of the person, as well as the word 'Son',[210] are lacking, and there are no traces of the essential formulation of two natures and one person or hypostasis "in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation ... gathered together into one person (*prosopon*) and one hypostasis" (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως ἀτρέπτως ἀδιαιρέτως ἀχωρίστως ... εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης). According to Meyendorff, the 'novelty' of Chalcedon, from the soteriological point of view, was that "ultimate deification of man had its inception in the union of the humanity of Christ with his divinity in an intimate and inseparable wholeness of person". Strophe 18 may suggest the union of the humanity with the divinity in the Chalcedonian sense, but the terminological evidence is lacking. In fact, it seems as if the Chalcedonian solution of the two natures and one hypostasis was not the framework within which the Akathistos was created, for it is indifferent to the Christological statements which characterize the formula of Chalcedon. This observation challenges us to study the period *before* Chalcedon.

John Meyendorff notes that with the Chalcedonian formula "the only possible and orthodox way of wording the essential outlines of the mystery of the incarnation" was discovered. He believes that it provided a solution to the primary problem between Nestorius and Cyril, which they were not able to solve, viz. to make "a clear distinction between the Word, as person or hypostasis, and the divinity as a nature impassible, unchangeable, and common to the whole Trinity".[211] The incompatibility of the Christologies of Nestorius and Cyril is evident,[212] but it becomes frustrating precisely in the question of the immutability of the divine nature of the Logos. This problem is characteristic of the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril. As regards the Akathistos Hymn, the word 'unchanged' (ἀναλλοιώτως, Pr. 5) bears obvious witness to that debate.

In his second letter to Nestorius Cyril explains what the Nicene Fathers had meant in the creed "by saying that the Word from God

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[210] Except a Gospel allusion of Luke 1.31–4; Ak. 3.3–4: "How can a son be born of chaste loins?"

[211] Meyendorff (1975), 22–3.

[212] Cf. McGuckin (1994), 126–74: "The Christology of Nestorius", 175–226: "The Christology of Cyril".

took flesh and became human"—that the Logos became flesh in an unspeakable and inconceivable manner, without changing his divine nature.[213] The answer of Nestorius demonstrates that for him Cyril's argumentation is unwarranted, because it is logically inconsistent to say that godhead could suffer, or was recently born or rose again.[214] As an Antiochian theologian he cannot predicate birth, suffering and death of the divine Logos.[215] Nestorius defends the Antiochian view that the subject of the Incarnation should be called the Son.[216] Cyril adheres to his position in his third letter to Nestorius. Explicating the manner of the Incarnation he stresses again that the Logos remains absolutely unchangeable.[217] It is, however, not credible that the source of the word ἀναλλοιώτως of the Akathistos Hymn is Cyril's letter. More credible is the influence of the *Tomus ad Armenios* of Proclus, which, through the word ἀναλλοίωτος, brings clearly to the fore the Christological idea of the Akathistos.[218]

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[213] Tanner (1990), 41, 43: "For we do not say that the nature of the Word was changed and became flesh, nor that he was turned into a whole man made of body and soul. Rather do we claim that the Word in an unspeakable, inconceivable manner united to himself hypostatically flesh. . . . The Word becoming flesh means nothing else than that he partook of the flesh and blood like us; he made our body his own, and came forth a man from woman without casting aside his deity, or his generation from God the Father; but rather in his assumption of flesh remaining what he was."

[214] From the second letter of Nestorius to Cyril, Tanner (1990), 45: "By reading in a superficial way the tradition of those holy men (you were guilty of a pardonable ignorance), you concluded that they said that the Word who is coeternal with the Father was passible. Please look more closely at their language and you will find out that the divine choir of Fathers never said that the consubstantial godhead was capable of suffering, or that the whole being that was coeternal with the Father was recently born, or that it rose again, seeing that it had itself been the cause of resurrection of the destroyed temple." Ibid. 46: "For when he (Paul) was about to mention the death, to prevent anyone supposing that God the Word suffered, he says 'Christ', which is a title that expresses in one person both the impassible and the passible natures."

[215] See the elucidating account of the problem in Meyendorff (1975), 16–17.

[216] Tanner (1990), 45–6: "they intend to avoid separating expressions applicable to sonship and lordship and at the same time escape the danger of destroying the distinctive character of the natures by absorbing them into the one title of 'Son'."

[217] Tanner (1990), 51: " . . . for our salvation came down and emptying himself he became incarnate and was made man. This means that he took flesh from the holy virgin and made it his own, undergoing a birth like ours from her womb and coming forth a man from a woman. . . . he remained what he was, God in nature and truth. We do not say that his flesh was turned into the nature of the godhead or that the unspeakable Word of God was changed into the nature of the flesh. For he (the Word) is unalterable and absolutely unchangeable (ἀναλλοίωτος) and remains always the same as the scriptures say." On the Alexandrian view and Cyril's position cf. Pelikan (1971), 230–1.

[218] *ACO* IV.2.188.32–5, 190.1–19. Cf. Peltomaa, (1997), 32–4.

Proclus constructs the whole treatise on two key expressions: "the Word became flesh" (λόγος ἐσαρκώθη) and "took the form of a servant" (τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφὴν λαβόντα):

> We believe that God the Word became flesh without suffering and we piously believe, because this is the foundation to our salvation. But we also love him who, for our sake, took the form of a servant, without undergoing any change of nature or contributing any addition to the Trinity.[219]

> God himself, the uncreated, beginningless, uncircumscribed and all-powerful Word came and took flesh . . . and taking the form of a servant became flesh and was born of a virgin, in all things wishing to show that in truth he had become human.[220]

In the passage where Proclus tries to make a distinction between person and nature he uses these key expressions, which he describes as the seeds of salvation.[221] After having argued that the godhead never changes,[222] he interprets the 'became' (ἐγένετο) and the 'took' (ἔλαβεν). The former means "indivisible unity of the extremes" and the latter "immutability of his nature".[223] The Logos is immutable.[224] Proclus repeats that the scrip-

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[219] *ACO* IV.2.188.32–5: πιστεύομεν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς λόγος ἀπαθῶς ἐσαρκώθη, καὶ εὐσεβῶς πιστεύομεν· αὕτη γὰρ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας ἡ κρηπίς· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφὴν λαβόντα μήτε φύσεως τροπὴν ὑπομείναντα μήτε προσθήκην τῇ τριάδι ἐργασάμενον.

[220] *ACO* IV.2.189.27–30: αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἄναρχος καὶ ἀπερίγραπτος καὶ παντοδύναμος λόγος ἐλθὼν ἐσαρκώθη ... καὶ λαβὼν τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφήν, ἐγένετο σὰρξ καὶ ἐτέχθη ἐκ παρθένου, πανταχοῦ βουλόμενος δεῖξαι ὅτι κατὰ ἀλήθειαν γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος.

[221] *ACO* IV.2.190.1–16; cf. Constas (1994), 240. *ACO* IV.2.190.3–5: φαμὲν οὖν ἑκατέραις κεχρημένοι ταῖς γραφικαῖς φωναῖς ὅτι καὶ ἐγένετο σὰρξ καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφήν, καὶ ἑκάτερα εὐσεβῶς νοούμενα, σωτηρίας ἡμῖν τυγχάνει σπέρματα. "We say then, using both written expressions, both that he became flesh and that he took the form of a servant, and both matters when thought about reverently form the seeds of salvation for us."

[222] *ACO* IV.2.190.2: μένει γὰρ ἡ θεότης ἀλλοιώσεως ἀνωτέρα. "Godhead remains above change."

[223] *ACO* IV.2.190.5–9: διὰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ ἐγένετο τὸ ἀδιαίρετον τῆς ἄκρας ἑνώσεως ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς ὑπαινίττεται. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ μονὰς οὐκ ἂν τμηθείη εἰς μονάδας δύο· ἡ γὰρ εἰς ταύτας διαιρουμένη οὐκ ἂν εἴη μονάς, ἀλλὰ δυάς· οὕτως τὸ ἓν κατὰ τὴν ἄκραν ἕνωσιν οὐκ ἂν διαιρεθείη εἰς δύο. τὸ δὲ ἔλαβεν βοᾷ τὸ ἄτρεπτον τῆς φύσεως. "For by the 'became' the Gospel-writer hints at the indivisibility of the extreme union, just as the unit could not be divided into two units. For the unit so divided would not be one unit, but two. Thus the one according to the extreme union would not be divided into two. But the 'took' indicates the immutability of his nature."

[224] *ACO* IV.2.190.9–13: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πᾶν το γινόμενον ἢ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντος γίνεται, ὡς ὁ οὐρανὸς μὴ πρότερον ὤν, ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ὑπάρχοντος ἀλλοιοῦται, ὡς τὸ Νειλῶιον ῥεῖθρον ἐξ ὕδατος εἰς αἷμα μετεβλήθη· ἑκάτερα δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς θείας φύσεως ἀνάρμοστα· οὔτε γὰρ ἐξ

ture uses these two expressions to describe the "unity of the person" and the "immutability of the nature".[225] The word ἀναλλοιώτως appears emphatically in this short passage: in the interpretation ("the unchanged Word", ὁ ἀναλλοίωτος λόγος, and "the unchangingness of his nature", τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον τῆς φύσεως) and as the concept of immutability in the single assertion "for godhead remains above change" (μένει γὰρ ἡ θεότης ἀλλοιώσεως ἀνωτέρα). The Christological emphasis of our hymn on Incarnation is to be found here. The word ἀναλλοιώτως of the prooemium, which is a later addition to the hymn, hints at the arguments over the immutability of the Logos in the Incarnation, the main issue in the Nestorian controversy.

We know a fragment of the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia which illustrates the way of thinking of the Antiochians. A comparison of this passage with the Akathistos reveals the virtual dogmatic attitude of the hymn:

> When they ask us, "Was Mary Mother of man or Mother of God?" let us say "Both: the first by the nature of the fact, the second by relation (ἀναφορᾷ)". For she was Mother of a man by nature since He who was in Mary's womb and issued from it was man; she was Mother of God since God was in the Man who was born, not circumscribed in His nature within man, but being in Him according to the disposition of His will.[226]

The idea 'not circumscribed in his nature within man' is the Antiochian dogmatic point which is contrary to the thesis of the Akathistos: the uncircumscribed Logos—is contained—whole—in your womb—container of the uncontainable God (ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος—χωρεῖται—ὅλος—ἐν μήτρᾳ σου—χώρα ἀχωρήτου Θεοῦ). Thus the word ἀναλλοι-

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οὐκ ὄντων παρήχθη ὁ ἀεὶ ἄναρχος οὔτε ἐξ ὄντων ἐτράπη ὁ ἀναλλοίωτος λόγος. "For all that comes to be arises either from non-being, as the sky which did not exist before, or from changing what exists, as the stream of the Nile was changed from water to blood; but both are incongruous with divine nature, for he who is ever without beginning was not brought forth from non-being nor did the unchanging Word arise from alteration in what exists."

[225] *ACO* IV.2.190.13–16: διὰ τοῦτο δι' ἑκατέρων καὶ τὸ ἄτρεπτον τῆς θεότητος καὶ τὸ ἀδιαίρετον τοῦ μυστηρίου ἡ θεία ὑπεμφαίνουσα γραφὴ τὸ ἐγένετο εἶπεν καὶ τὸ ἔλαβεν ἐκήρυξεν, ἵνα διὰ μὲν τοῦ προτέρου τὸ ἑνικὸν τοῦ προσώπου παραστήσῃ, διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἑτέρου τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον τῆς φύσεως ἐκβοήσῃ. "For both these reasons, the holy Scripture, hinting at the immutability of divinity and the indivisibility of the mystery, wrote the 'became' and announced the 'took', so that through the former the singularity of the person should be established, and through the latter the immutability of his nature should be proclaimed."

[226] *De Incarnatione* 15, Frag. 2, cited by Sellers (1954), 172 n. 1.

ώτως in the prooemium is to be interpreted as the fundamental argument of Cyril.

Line 15.4, "not a descent according to place" (οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε), corroborates the supposition that the word ἀναλλοιώτως reflects the Nestorian conflict. The history of the sentence οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε is linked with the charges of Apollinarianism against Cyril by the Nestorians. The explanation is as follows: Apollinarius had been accused of teaching that the flesh of Christ was heavenly in origin and pre-existing. He himself had rejected this charge: "It is plain from all we have written that we do not say that the Saviour's flesh has come down from heaven."[227] Also Cyril had to defend himself against such a charge as is explicitly expressed in his letter to John of Antioch:[228] "So when we say that Our Lord Jesus Christ is from heaven and from above, we do not mean that his holy flesh was brought down from above and from heaven."[229] And in the same passage Cyril connects the immutability of the divine nature of the Logos with the descent from heaven: "God the Word came down from above and from heaven and emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, and was called Son of Man while he remained what he was, that is God, (for he is changeless and unalterable by nature)."[230] On these grounds the assertion οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε could be considered as an Alexandrian 'defence' against the accusations made by the Antiochians in the Nestorian controversy. So, we can conclude that the hymn is not directed against the Apollinarian heresy as has been claimed since Krypiakiewicz but against the Nestorian heresy.[231]

As to Cyril's view, he held from the very start of the Theotokos controversy the title 'Theotokos' to be a bulwark of Christological confes-

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[227] Cited by Kelly (1989), 294.

[228] Ep. 39 *PG* 77.173–82; *ACO* I.1.4.15–20; Tanner (1990), 70–4. Translation McGuckin (1994), 343–8.

[229] Translation McGuckin (1994), 346 (Tanner 1990: 71); *PG* 77.177D–180A: Ὅταν δὲ λέγωμεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἄνωθεν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατενεχθείσης τῆς ἁγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα φαμέν.

[230] Translation McGuckin (1994), 346 (Tanner 1990: 72); *ACO* I.1.4.18.21–3; *PG* 77.180A: Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταφοιτήσας θεὸς Λόγος κεκένωκεν ἑαυτὸν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, καὶ κεχρημάτικεν υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου μετὰ τοῦ μεῖναι ὃ ἦν, τουτέστι Θεός (ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀναλλοιώτως κατὰ φύσιν ἐστίν).

[231] Krypiakiewicz (1909), 364–5, 373, 380.

sion.[232] In his second letter to Nestorius he includes the 'dogma' of the Theotokos, the formulation which the Council of Ephesus accepted at the same time as it asserted the inner unity of this letter and the creed of Nicaea.[233]

> So [the holy fathers] dared to call the holy Virgin 'Birth-giver of God' (Theotokos), not as though the nature of the Word or his godhead received the origin of their being from the holy Virgin, but because from her his holy body was born with a rational soul, and being united in his hypostasis with this body the Word is said to have been begotten in the flesh.[234]

According to this formulation the nature of the Logos and his godhead did not receive their origin from the Virgin. But she is called Theotokos, because the holy body, with which the Logos was hypostatically united, was born of her. In the same way the Theotokos is connected with the Logos in Cyril's third letter with its anathemas.[235] So, in the Cyrillian formulations the term 'Theotokos' is defined exclusively through the divine *Logos*—"since in the Christ *there is no other subject* but the Word to whom she could have given birth", as Meyendorff clarifies Cyril's thought.[236] This same holds good for the Theotokos of the Akathistos.

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[232] McGuckin (1994), 29. Cyril's letter to the monks of Egypt (Ep. 1, "Ad Monachos Aegypti", *PG* 77.9–40; *ACO* I.1.1.10–23; translation McGuckin 1994: 245–61) marks the opening of the Nestorian controversy (together with his Paschal letter).

[233] Grillmeier (1975), 485.

[234] *ACO* I.1.12.28: οὕτως τεθαρσήκασι Θεοτόκον εἰπεῖν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον, οὐχ ὡς τῆς τοῦ λόγου φύσεως ἤτοι τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι λαβούσης ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου, ἀλλ' ὡς γεννηθέντος ἐξ αὐτῆς τοῦ ἁγίου σώματος ψυχωθέντος λογικῶς, ᾧ καὶ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἑνωθεὶς ὁ λόγος γεγεννῆσθαι λέγεται κατὰ σάρκα.

[235] *ACO* I.1.1.40: Ἐπειδὴ δὲ θεὸν ἑνωθέντα σαρκὶ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἡ ἁγία παρθένος ἐκτέτοκε σαρκικῶς, ταύτῃ τοι καὶ θεοτόκον εἶναι φαμεν αὐτήν, οὐχ ὡς τῆς τοῦ λόγου φύσεως τῆς ὑπάρχεως τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐχούσης ἀπὸ σαρκός ... ἀλλ' ὡς ἤδη προείπομεν, ἐπειδὴ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἑνώσας ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον καὶ ἐκ μήτρας αὐτῆς γέννησιν ὑπέμεινε σαρκικήν. "Since the holy Virgin bore in the flesh God who was united hypostatically with the flesh, we call her for that reason Birth-giver of God, not as though the nature of the Word had the beginning of its existence from the flesh ... but because, as we have said, he united humanity to himself hypostatically and underwent a birth according to the flesh from her womb." *ACO* I.1.1.40 (anathema I): Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ θεὸν εἶναι κατὰ ἀλήθειαν τὸν Ἐμμανουὴλ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θεοτόκον τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον (γεγέννηκε γὰρ σαρκικῶς σάρκα γεγονότα τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ λόγον) ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. "If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore that the holy Virgin is the Birth-giver of God (for she bore according to the flesh the Word of God become flesh), let him be anathema." While Cyril's second letter formed the decisive dogmatic act of the Synod with the creed of Nicaea, Cyril's third letter to Nestorius "rated only as evidence and was included in the Acts", Grillmeier (1975), 485.

[236] Meyendorff (1975), 18.

The *formula reunionis* of 433, a most important act on the way from Ephesus to Chalcedon, is the second step in the development of the doctrine of the Incarnation:

> We confess, therefore, our Lord Jesus, the Christ, the only-begotten son of God, perfect God and perfect man with a rational soul and body, begotten before the ages from the Father in his godhead, and in the last days for us and for our salvation born of Mary the virgin in his humanity, of one essence with the Father in godhead and of one essence with us in humanity, for a union of two natures took place. Therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to this understanding of the unconfused union we confess the holy Virgin to be the Birth-giver of God (Theotokos) because God the Word took flesh and became man and from his very conception united to himself the temple he took from her.[237]

We can see that it expounds Cyril's argument for sanctioning the title 'Theotokos' through the Logos, who took the temple from her.[238] And instead of his formulation "a union according to his person (hypostasis)" (ἕνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν) the confession of Christ's nature is made according to the unconfused union of two natures.

The third step was taken at Chalcedon. The *definitio fidei* does not display the Logos as the subject of the Incarnation,[239] nor the intimate connection between the Logos and the Theotokos. The title 'Theotokos' has now been put into a context which confirms Christ's human nature ("in his humanity of Mary the Virgin, the Birth-giver of God (Theotokos)", ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς Θεοτόκου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα). For Cyril the Theotokos is an "argument fulfilling the role of a cardinal defence of belief in the personal deity of the Saviour", as McGuckin sums up Cyril's position.[240] In the Chalcedonian formula again the

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[237] *ACO* I.1.4.8–9: Ὁμολογοῦμεν τοιγαροῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, θεὸν τέλειον καὶ ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, ἐπ' ἐσχάτου δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. Δύο γὰρ φύσεων ἕνωσις γέγονεν· δι' ὃ ἕνα Χριστὸν, ἕνα υἱὸν, ἕνα κύριον ὁμολογοῦμεν. Κατὰ ταύτην τὴν τῆς ἀσυγχύτου ἑνώσεως ἔννοιαν ὁμολογοῦμεν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον Θεοτόκον διὰ τὸ τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον σαρκωθῆναι καὶ ἐνανθρωπῆσαι καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συλλήψεως ἑνῶσαι ἑαυτῷ τὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς ληφθέντα ναόν.

[238] The relevance of the metaphor ναός in Cyril's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, cf. Imhof and Lorenz (1981), 64–74.

[239] *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, s.v. "Das Konzil v. Chalcedon", col. 1001–2, notes that this may be inferred, but not demonstrated explicitly, from the texts.

[240] McGuckin (1994), 29.

whole setting with the title 'Theotokos' is an expression of the doctrine of two natures of Christ.[241]

There is no doubt that the title 'Theotokos' in the formula of Chalcedon would not still be "a crucial anti-Nestorian statement confirming the decisions of Ephesus I",[242] since the council, working out the new formula, used Cyril's second letter to Nestorius and the letter to John of Antioch.[243] It is evident as well that while defining the meaning of the term 'Theotokos', which was technically limited to the Incarnation, as the description of how God became human, Cyril by no means ignored Mary's soteriological role,[244] the human nature taken by Christ from her,[245] but at Ephesus the divine birth was stressed at the expense of the motherhood.[246] In the development of the doctrine on the Incarnation from Ephesus to Chalcedon, from Cyril's Theotokos-definition to the *formula reunionis* and the *definitio fidei* of Chalcedon, an important structural modification occurred in the image of Mary, because of the exact balancing of the two natures of Christ. Behind the concept of the Theotokos in Cyril lies a relationship between the divine Logos and the Virgin, but in the definition of Chalcedon the title 'Theotokos' displays the relationship between God-human being and the Virgin. In the Akathistos Hymn Mary is described in a way which, in relation to

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241 Cf. Benko (1993), 257.

242 Meyendorff (1989), 175.

243 Grillmeier (1975), 544.

244 Asserted in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed of 381, *ACO* II.1.2.80.7–8: καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου. "And for our salvation came down from heaven and took flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary."

245 In the second letter to Nestorius of Cyril he asserts: ἐπειδὴ δὲ δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἑνώσας ἑαυτῷ καθ' ὑπόστασιν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον πορῆλθεν ἐκ γυναικός, ταύτῃ τοι λέγεται γεννηθῆναι σαρκικῶς. Οὐ γὰρ πρῶτον ἄνθρωπος ἐγεννήθη κοινὸς ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου, εἶθ' οὕτως καταπεφοίτηκεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὁ λόγος, ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτῆς μήτρας ἑνωθεὶς ὑπομεῖναι λέγεται γέννησιν σαρκικήν, ὡς τῆς ἰδίας σαρκὸς τὴν γέννησιν οἰκειούμενος. "Because the Word hypostatically united human reality to himself, 'for us and for our salvation', and came forth of a woman, this is why he is said to have been begotten in a fleshy manner. The Word did not subsequently descend upon an ordinary man previously born of the holy virgin, but he is made one from his mother's womb, and thus is said to have undergone a fleshy birth in so far as he appropriated to himself the birth of his own flesh." (*ACO* I.1.1.27.10–13; Tanner 1990: 42; translation McGuckin 1994: 264).

246 Fiores (1996), 127 n. 114, notes that Ephesus did not go into all the implications of the term 'Theotokos', considering only the essential moment of conception and birth, and not the overall development of the concept of motherhood, which forms such an important existential element in a person's life.

Christ, maintains the original Cyrillian definition of the Theotokos ("the uncircumscribed Word . . . a birth from the Virgin, seized by God", 15.1, 5; "you who gave birth to the Word, the holiest of all holies", 24.1–2; "the Virgin, bearing God in her womb", 5.1; "tabernacle of God and the Word", 23.6). I have already stated above that in the hymn the use of the word 'Theotokos' reflects the emphasis on the *Theo*tokos. Conversely, within the image of Mary of the Akathistos the setting of the Chalcedonian definition is ignored. My conclusion is that the image of Mary, as depicted in the Christology of the Akathistos Hymn, does not represent the Chalcedonian definition.

The Akathistos Hymn was created sometime during the period when the struggle over Christ's nature and person was taking place. That discussion was too overwhelming for it to be plausible that the author of a hymn with the theme of the Incarnation did not take it into consideration. Obviously the hymnographer had to avoid words and expressions which the congregation was not able to understand—and the Christological controversy was characteristically a dispute over terms, which the two theological parties conceived in different ways.[247] In spite of the complexity of the matter, the conclusion that the Christology of the Akathistos Hymn does not represent the 'in two natures' stage,[248] i.e. the period after Chalcedon, seems to be justifiable, because the explicit terminological evidence does not support the opposite hypothesis.[249] Through the polarity godhead–humanity the hymn demonstrates the full reality of the godhead and humanity of Christ (which since Paul had been described by using the antithetical arrangement)[250] but does not explicate the *manner* of the unity in Christ.[251] And there is no testimony to the more advanced formula concerning the *person* (εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτός, "the one and the same").

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[247] An exposition on the semantic difference in the debate between Nestorius and Cyril is in McGuckin (1994), 137–74; on the monophysite dispute Meyendorff (1975), 13–46; Pelikan (1971), 269: "After Chalcedon 'the technical terms' of the trinitarian and Christological dogmas were variously understood by various parties and schools, with the result that the accusation of logomachy . . . would seem to fit the latter half of the fifth century and the first half of the sixth century better than it does most periods in the history of Christian doctrine."

[248] Grillmeier (1975), 533, 548–9; cf. Meyendorff (1975), 27–8.

[249] Contra Toniolo (1989), 267, and contra Vereecken (1993), 364–5.

[250] Grillmeier (1975), 17 ff.

[251] Grillmeier (1975), 445.

It is only justified to argue that the Akathistos Hymn was created during the monophysite struggles *after* Chalcedon if the themes, slogans or catchwords which the monophysites used[252] are shown to exist in the form of refutations, denials or references in the text of the hymn, for the assertion that Christ had only one nature (μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη)[253] was interpreted in various ways, compatible or incompatible with the Chalcedonian orthodoxy.[254] But this will be difficult. For instance, the 'new creation' (νέα κτίσις,[255] 13.1) can be interpreted just as well in a monophysite as in an antimonophysite way. And if we think of the case of Eutyches,[256] who according to Pope Leo deceived people "by saying that the Word was made flesh in the sense that he emerged from the virgin's womb having a human form but not having the reality of his mother's body",[257] i.e. Christ is not *homoousios* with us, it seems to be logical to interpret verse 18.4 ("he appeared for us, among us, like us", δι' ἡμᾶς ἐφάνη καθ' ἡμᾶς ὅμοιος) as an anti-Eutychean assertion. But because the theme of Christ's nature *after the Incarnation*, which was the crucial issue, does not appear in the hymn, the verse constitutes no proof that the hymn was specifically directed against Eutyches' teachings.

Anyhow, one thing is certain. The hymn was written in the Alexandrian tradition, and it has elements which reflect the Nestorian controversy: the Philippian *locus* ("taking the form of a servant", μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, strophes 14, 16, 18, 20), which was a central text in the debate between Cyril and Nestorius,[258] the Logos as the subject of the Incarnation, the word 'Theotokos' as encapsulating the relationship between the Logos and the Virgin, the word ἀναλλοιώτως, and the

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252 Grillmeier (1975), 524; *ACO* II.1.1.110.5–7: εἷς γὰρ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, κἂν ἡ τῶν φύσεων μὴ ἀγνοῆται διαφορά, ἐξ ὧν τὴν ἀπόρρητον ἕνωσιν πεπρᾶχθαι φαμέν. "We declare one Lord Jesus Christ, without being ignorant of the difference of the natures from which the ineffable union took place." *ACO* II.1.1.143.10–11: ὁμολογῶ ἐκ δύο φύσεων γεγενῆσθαι τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν πρὸ τῆς ἑνώσεως, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἕνωσιν μίαν φύσιν ὁμολογῶ. "I confess our Lord was begotten of two natures before the union, but I confess one nature after the union."

253 Cf. Grillmeier (1975), 480–3: "Cyril and the Concept of Person".

254 Allen (1994).

255 Cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. κτίσις, ἡ.

256 Cf. Kelly (1989), 330–4.

257 *ACO* II.2.1.26.17–19; Tanner (1990), 78: nec frustratorie loquens ita verbum diceret carnem factum, ut editus utero virginis Christus haberet formam hominis et non haberet materni corporis veritatem.

258 McGuckin (1994), 186.

verse "not a descent according to place" (οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε). The anti-Nestorian approach of the Akathistos is clearer if we compare the hymn with Proclus's writings. Grillmeier asserts that Proclus used "the language of the Fathers of Chalcedon" already in his first homily, and he deliberately sought a middle course between the Alexandrian and Antiochian terminologies.[259] Proclus was the most famous 'Mariologist' in Constantinople, and his teaching must have been widely known on account of his high rank. But in the Akathistos there is no trace of his balanced view, the word 'son' is lacking, and only the divine in the mystery of the Theotokos has been taken into consideration. Such an approach is understandable only in the immediate aftermath of Ephesus, when the principle of the full humanity of Jesus was overshadowed by the Alexandrian emphasis on the divinity of the Word.[260]

A hymn is not a theological tract, but in one way or another a text always reflects its time. The Christology and the image of Mary point to the context of the Council of Ephesus. But this hymn, in the first place, is not to be understood as an attack against a heresy. It is a song of praise to the Virgin, who gave birth to God, and made the redemption of humankind possible, hence the salutations.

Proclus of Constantinople as a Marian Preacher

Proclus's teaching on Mary is best attested in two documents composed seven years apart: in the Marian homily which is the first known attack against Nestorius, and in the *Tomus ad Armenios*, the 'last word' in the Nestorian controversy. Their style and treatment of the theological contents differ greatly, but principally they present the same ideas. But just to mention one differing element: the conception 'through ears',[261] characteristic of Proclus, does not appear in the Tome. In the homily Proclus pays attention to the role of the Virgin in the *oikonomia*, in the redemptive plan of God, and uses the word 'Theotokos' only once at the very end as an epithet of Mary—for all he has presented above he sees

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[259] Grillmeier (1975), 520–1.

[260] Constas (1994), 102.

[261] *ACO* I.1.1.103.25–6: ἐκεῖ ὁ λόγος διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς εἰσελθὼν τὸν ναὸν ἐζωοπλάστησεν. "Through ears that obeyed, the Word entered to form a living temple"; *ACO* I.1.1.107.19: δι' ἀκοῆς εἰσῆλθεν. "He entered through the ear".

as a "clear testimony to the holy Theotokos Mary".[262] In the Tome, whose aim is to reject the two sons theory, he explicates Mary's part in the Incarnation in one of the crucial passages. He also presents a justification of the usage of the title 'Theotokos', a word which appears only once in the whole letter and in this context. These two documents are characterized by the sparing use of the word 'Theotokos'; for in them, in the first place, Mary is introduced as the Virgin.

In the Tome there are a few Marian passages included in the assertions of the nature of Christ, one of which deals particularly with the Theotokos issue. For the most part the Christological claims follow what Cyril had presented in his two letters to Nestorius before Ephesus.[263] But there is one idea which is not found in Cyril's letters: "By necessity Jesus Christ saved the world, having come down to earth and lived among men, being both God and human, not dividing into two but remaining one: by being born from a woman he demonstrates that he is human, and by the fact that he was conceived without sexual relations and that he protected the bearer so that she remained a virgin, he gives a testimony to being God."[264]

Proclus begins his treatment of the Theotokos with the prophets who proclaim the mystery foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah, where the name Emmanuel appears. Since the name Emmanuel is interpreted as 'God with us' by Gabriel when he announced the conception to Mary, it

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[262] *ACO* I.1.1.107.26.

[263] (1) The Logos became flesh and was born from the Virgin, cf. *ACO* IV.2.189.27–30: λόγος ἐλθὼν ἐσαρκώθη ... καὶ λαβὼν τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφήν, ἐγένετο σὰρξ καὶ ἐτέχθη ἐκ παρθένου, πανταχοῦ βουλόμενος δεῖξαι ὅτι κατὰ ἀλήθειαν γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος. "The Word came and took flesh ... and taking the form of a servant became flesh and was born of a virgin, in all things wishing to show that in truth he had become human." Cf. *ACO* IV.2.192.13 ff.: (ὁ Λόγος) σαρκοῦται ἐκ παρθένου. "(The Word) takes flesh of the Virgin." (2) As Christ is *homoousios* with the Father according to divinity in a similar way he is *homophylos* with the Virgin according to the flesh, cf. 193.8–9: ὥσπερ τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα ὁμοούσιος, οὕτως ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ τῇ παρθένῳ κατὰ τὴν σάρκα ὁμόφυλος. "Just as he is of one essence with the Father in godhead, so he is of one race with the Virgin in flesh." (3) The existence of the eternal Logos is not from Mary, only his appearance (manifestation) *kata sarka*, cf. *ACO* IV.2.194.13–15.

[264] *ACO* IV.2.192.21–5: ἀλλὰ ἀναγκαίως ὁ αὐτὸς θεός τε ἂν καὶ ἄνθρωπος, οὐ διαιρούμενος εἰς δύο, ἀλλὰ μένων εἷς, διὰ μὲν τοῦ ἐκ γυναικὸς γεννηθῆναι δεικνὺς ὅτι ἄνθρωπος, διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀσυνδυάστως καὶ φυλάξαι τὴν τεκοῦσαν παρθένον μαρτυρόμενος ὅτι ἐστὶ θεός, ἔσωσεν τὸν κόσμον Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός, ἐλθὼν ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συναναστραφείς.

should be a sufficient justification of the title 'Theotokos'.[265] And then he presents the whole matter as a question of the condescension: "Why, on account of the condescension of the one who was born, do they prune back the glory of the one who gave birth?"[266] And in the following passage, after having refuted the opposing view, caused by the interpretation of the word ὁμόφυλος,[267] he sums up: "Where a birth surpasses the laws of nature, there the one who is born is God."[268]

The argument of the Tome, "where a birth surpasses the laws of nature, there the one who is born is God", is also found in the text of the homily: "If the mother had not remained a virgin, the child born would have been a mere man and the birth no miracle."[269] Here the concrete testimony to the miracle is the undefiled womb which its spotless creator, compared with an architect and a potter, did not defile.[270] So there is in the homily the idea that Mary remained a virgin after the birth-giving.[271] In the Tome again there is the φυλάξαι τὴν τεκοῦσαν παρθένον (the birth-giver remained a virgin as a result of the protection of God). These two passages demonstrate that Proclus presents the idea of Mary's virginity *post partum*. It is important to notice that the virginity as it is presented here, in the context of the divine birth, does not refer to the context of Matthew 1.25, which originally provoked the discussion on the virginity *post partum*.[272]

The soteriology of Proclus is based on the human nature of Christ, the body he took from Mary. In the homily he deals with the topic in a popular manner: "So do not be ashamed of the pains, O man! They were the start of our salvation. Had he not been born of a woman, he

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[265] *ACO* IV.2.193.12–14: εἰ δὲ προφητῶν γλῶσσαι, τὸ ἄρρητον προσαλπίζουσαι μυστήριον, βοῶσιν· ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει, καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ὅ ἑρμηνεύων ὁ Γαβριὴλ φάσκει· μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. "If the tongues of the prophets, pealing out the ineffable mystery, cry 'Behold the virgin shall conceive in her womb and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel', interpreting which Gabriel says 'God with us'."

[266] *ACO* IV.2.193.14–15: τοῦ χάριν, διὰ τὴν τοῦ τεχθέντος συγκατάβασιν, τὴν δόξαν τῆς τεκούσης περικόπτουσι;

[267] *ACO* IV.2.193.15–20.

[268] *ACO* IV.2.193.20–1: ὅπου ὑπὲρ φύσιν ὁ τόκος, ἐκεῖ ὁ τεχθεῖς θεός.

[269] *ACO* I.1.1.104.3–4: εἰ μὲ παρθένος ἔμεινεν ἡ μήτηρ, ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος ὁ τεχθεὶς καὶ οὐ παράδοξος ὁ τόκος.

[270] *ACO* I.1.1.104.10–12.

[271] *ACO* I.1.1.104.4: εἰ δὲ καὶ μετὰ τόκον ἔμεινεν παρθένος . . . "If she remained a virgin after childbirth . . .".

[272] According to Caro (1971–3), 336, the theme of Mary's relationship to Joseph was completely absent in the homilies of the period of Ephesus. Cf. Kelly (1989), 494–5.

would not have died. Had he not died, he would not 'through death have destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil'."[273] In the *Tomus*, of course, even though the idea is the same ("and becoming human he saves by means of like suffering the race with which he is one according to the flesh", καὶ γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος, σῴζει τῷ ὁμοιοπαθεῖ τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ὁμόφυλον γένος)[274] the question of the suffering has been treated with its all theological implications. But it is also plain from the text of the homily that Proclus does not confine Mary's role in the Incarnation exclusively to the birth-giving, but that he views it also from a wider perspective, that of the *oikonomia*, a redemptive plan of God, for he starts the actual treatise by referring to the Fall:

> He was born of a woman, God but not solely God, and man but not merely man. By his birth what was once the door of sin was made the gate of salvation. For where the serpent had poured out poison through disobedience, there through obedient ears the Word entered to form a living temple. From the former it was Cain, the first disciple of sin, who peeped out; from the latter it was Christ, the redeemer of the race, who sprouted unsown.[275]

Here we see the antithesis Eve–Mary, the ground for the concept of the Second Eve, attested since Justin the Martyr. Proclus also relates in detail how the debt of humankind to death emerged and how the ransom was paid.[276] His depiction reflects the earliest speculations about salvation as redemption.[277] Redemption was understood as a bargain, in terms of which the ransom (the body of Christ taken from Mary to death) was the payment of the debt which the devil demanded to be paid, for "by the hand of Adam we all signed a bond to sin".[278] This explains why Proclus calls Mary "the marketplace of the contract of the Saviour".[279]

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273 *ACO* I.1.1.104.6–9.
274 *ACO* IV.2.190.18–19.
275 *ACO* I.1.1.103.23–104.1: ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθη ἐκ γυναικὸς Θεὸς οὐ γυμνός καὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐ ψιλός, καὶ πύλην σωτηρίας ὁ τεχθεὶς τὴν πάλαι τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἔδειξε θύραν. ὅπου γὰρ ὁ ὄφις διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τὸν ἰὸν ἐξέχεεν, ἐκεῖ ὁ λόγος διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς εἰσελθὼν τὸν ναὸν ἐζωοπλάστησεν· ὅθεν ὁ πρῶτος μαθητὴς τῆς ἁμαρτίας Κάιν προέκυψεν, ἐκεῖθεν ὁ τοῦ γένους λυτρωτὴς Χριστὸς ἀσπόρως ἐβλάστησεν.
276 *ACO* I.1.1.105.1–106.17.
277 Kelly (1989), 163–88, 375–86, 395–400. Cf. Col. 2.13–14.
278 *ACO* I.1.1.105.2–3: διὰ τοῦ Ἀδὰν πάντες τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐχειρογραφήσαμεν.
279 *ACO* I.1.1.103.13: ἡ πανήγυρις τοῦ σωτηρίου συναλλάγματος.

A summary of Proclus's doctrinal teaching on Mary, drawn from the two dogmatically important texts mentioned above, reveals that his focus is on the manner of Christ's birth, the conception and virginal birth-giving. On that basis he explains the unity of subject in Christ, which justifies the title 'Theotokos'. And as far as his treatment is not involved with the question of the nature of Christ, it does not encompass anything other than speculations which can be reduced to the antithesis Eve–Mary.[280] The main function Mary is given is giving birth to God the Logos. Where the word 'mother' appears it is used to emphasize the divine birth, and the antithesis virgin–mother does not contain any other aspects than the miracle of the virgin who is a mother.[281] To this it could be added that it is conspicuous that Mary's personality is not presented.

In broad outline this summary characterizes the Akathistos as well, but the hymn exhibits themes which correspond in detail with the arguments of Proclus. Firstly, the Theotokos issue is reflected in the matter of the condescension, emphatically expressed in the central strophe (15) of the hymn: "the uncircumscribed Word was . . . in no way absent from those above"—"divine condescension"—"birth from the Virgin, seized by God", while the mystery and the miracle of the virgin birth (ὑπὲρ φύσιν ὁ τόκος) is the basic tone of the hymn.[282] Secondly, the idea that virginity *post partum* results from the protection of God is to be found explicitly in the Akathistos: "From a seedless womb he came, preserving it chaste as it was before" (13.1–4). Thirdly, both the homily and the Akathistos Hymn start with the concept of the Second Eve (the first four strophes, and the first four salutations, especially "Hail, recalling of fallen Adam; hail, deliverance of the tears of Eve", 1.6–9). Fourthly, salvation is conceived as redemption, which is revealed by the fact that the hymn describes the meaning of the Incarnation as the tearing up of the

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[280] E.g. *PG* 65.720B; Constas (1994), 221, translation 232: "On account of Mary all women are blessed. No longer is the female accursed, for it has produced an offspring that surpasses even the angels in glory. Eve is fully healed."

[281] The beginning of Homily 4 illustrates this, Constas (1994), 186–7, translation 196–7 (*PG* 65.708C–709A): "A child's birth has conquered the laws of nature. And though nature cannot conceive of this birth-giving mother, grace showed her to be not only a birth-giver, but preserved her virginity, made her mother, and did not despoil her incorruptibility. . . . Let us all then draw near, not, however, as if to dance at the wedding feast of the Lord's mother, for she is an unwed virgin. Instead, let us honor her virginal birth pangs, for although a virgin she became a mother."

[282] E.g. "How can a son be born of chaste loins?" (3.3–4); "Hail, you who ineffably gave birth to the light" (3.14); "strange birth" (14.1); "the miracle" (13.1–5); "the mystery" (17.5).

bond: "Wishing to grant release from ancient debts"—"the redeemer of all people"—"after tearing up the record of sins" (22.1–5). It may be added that the Akathistos does not present Mary as a personality either.

Not very much can be said about Proclus's ethical teaching related to Mary, because the textual evidence is scarce. We do know that Proclus represents the idea of ascetical tradition in which Mary's chastity and pure birth-giving were seen as an example to those who strove for chastity in order to give birth to Christ in their own body. This idea, which was found already in Origen and is a commonplace by Proclus's time, is the spiritual ground from which the address to womankind of the first homily arises : "It is the Virgin's festival. . . . The subject is chastity. What we celebrate today is the pride and glory of womankind, wrought in her who was mother and virgin at once."[283] The introduction of the homily is an encomium to the Virgin, demanding due rhetorical expressions. Yet the setting itself reveals that Proclus counts the 'achievement' of the Virgin as for the good of those who are involved, that is, the women and the virgins: "Let all nature leap for joy; women are honoured. Let all humankind dance; virgins receive praise."[284] Concerning the Akathistos, as I have discussed in the chapter on the Ephesian context, the whole of strophe 19 reflects the era of asceticism, when the pure birth-giving of Mary was an inspiration for practising virginity, and Proclus's homily is evidence of that practice.

In a passage of Homily 4 which includes four exhortations to women, one is especially devoted to the virgins: "Let virgins come running, too, for a virgin has given birth, not tarnishing her virginity but sealing her incorruptibility."[285] While the exhortation to the virgins stresses incorruption (ἀφθαρσία), the three others, referring to Mary as the Second Eve, stress obedience.[286] These instances demonstrate that Proclus con-

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[283] *ACO* I.1.1.103.4–7: Παρθενικὴ πανήγυρις σήμερον ... ἀγνείας γὰρ ἔχει ὑπόθεσιν, καὶ τοῦ γένους τῶν γυναικῶν καύχημα τὸ τελούμενον καὶ δόξα τοῦ θήλεος διὰ τὴν ἐν καιρῷ μητέρα καὶ παρθένον.

[284] *ACO* I.1.1.103.9–10: σκιρτάτω ἡ φύσις, καὶ γυναῖκες τιμῶνται· χορευέτω ἡ ἀνθρωπότης, καὶ παρθένοι δοξάζονται.

[285] *PG* 65.709C–712A; Constas (1994), 188/198: παρθένοι συντρεχέτωσαν, ὅτι παρθένος ἔτεκεν, οὐ τὴν παρθενίαν αἰσχύνασα, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν σφραγίσασα.

[286] *PG* 65.709B–712A; Constas (1994), 188/198–9: γυναῖκες τρεχέτωσαν, ὅτι γυνὴ οὐ θανάτου δεικνύει φυτόν, ἀλλὰ ζωῆς τίκτει καρπόν. ... μητέρες τρεχέτωσαν, ὅτι μήτηρ παρθένος τὸ ξύλον τῆς παρακοῆς διὰ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς διορθώσατο. θυγατέρες συντρεχέτωσαν, ὅτι μητρικῆς παρακοῆς ὕβριν θυγατρὸς ὑπακοὴ ἐξεδίκησε. "Let women come running, for there is a woman who does not bring forth the flower of death, but who gives birth to the fruit of life. . . . Let mothers come running, for through the tree of

siders chastity and obedience as the Marian virtues, but in these homilies Proclus does not explain the content of these 'basic virtues'. Homily 12, "In Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Resurrectionem", includes a passage which generally has been taken as a reference to the empress Pulcheria. In that context it is simply stated that the empress has "mortified her own body to passions".[287] But we have to take into consideration that the homilies we know from Proclus do not deal with ascetical life. In the Akathistos the emphasis is laid on incorruption, which refers to physical and spiritual chastity.

At this stage the similarity between the dogmatic and ethical contents of Proclus's writings on Mary and the Marian themes of the Akathistos can be affirmed. Next it is important to examine further the manner of description which produces the impersonality of the image of Mary. In Proclus's homilies that impersonality is especially striking where he uses the figure of speech of the womb, e.g. "Come and behold the womb of a virgin wider than creation, for the one whom creation could not contain is contained in her without constriction."[288] As I stated above, to focus the attention on the womb of the Virgin was a characteristic feature of the theological discussion of the time of Ephesus, reflecting the question of how the Incarnation physically took place. But at the same time this approach indicates clearly that the homilists do not refer to a *person* called Mary but to her *significance* in the economy of salvation, as Proclus's statement reveals: "The womb of a virgin contained the mystery of the divine dispensation."[289] This approach explains why the image of Mary in Proclus's homilies is impersonal. And it is plain that the same explanation is applicable to the Akathistos Hymn.

By this I am not claiming that the impersonality of Mary's image in Proclus's homilies makes his descriptions monotonous. And it would not do justice to Proclus to claim that his Marian figure is only an intellectual abstraction, a purified result of indispensable dogmatic reflections, for there is considerable enthusiasm for Mary in him.[290] Despite the fact

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life a virgin mother has corrected the tree of disobedience. Let daughters also come running, for a daughter's obedience vindicated the offence of the mother's disobedience."

[287] *PG* 65.788B: τὴν οἰκείαν σάρκα τοῖς πάθεσιν ἐνέκρωσε.

[288] *PG* 65.709B; Constas (1994), 187/197: δεῦτε ἴδωμεν γαστέρα παρθένου πλατυτέραν τῆς κτίσεως· ὁ γὰρ ἐκεῖ μὴ χωρούμενος, ἐν ταύτῃ ἀστενοχωρήτως ἐχώρησε.

[289] Hom. 3, *PG* 65.708A; Constas (1994), 165/174: τὸ δὲ μυστήριον τῆς θείας οἰκονομίας ἐβάστασε παρθένου γαστήρ.

[290] E.g. Hom. 5, *PG* 65.717C; Constas (1994), 218/230: Οὐδὲν τοίνυν ἐν βίῳ οἷον ἡ Θεοτόκος Μαρία. περίελθε δή, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, πᾶσαν τὴν κτίσιν τῷ λογισμῷ καὶ βλέπε εἰ

that he repeats the same two themes 'the virgin' (virgin—chastity—pure womb—virgin birth—miracle and mystery of the virgin birth) and the antithesis Eve–Mary, and never detaches them from the context of the Incarnation, he paints a picture which is not one-dimensional but multi-dimensional. For in a Marian theme he puts into words the vision he is confronted with when he observes the Incarnation, the divinely intended plan with its immeasurable perspectives, and it is precisely in this context that the multi-dimensionality of the image of Mary emerges.

It is most obvious that in Proclus's eyes all historical events are connected to Mary: the events which lead to the Incarnation; the prefigurations which foretold the Incarnation; the Incarnation itself; the events in Jesus's life, which testify to his being the Christ; and the promises related to the coming and the Second Parousia of Christ; all this is reflected as different aspects in the image of Mary which Proclus paints.[291] The focus where all this is put together is again Mary's womb. Proclus may vary his descriptions greatly, but basically the idea he preaches is always the same: at the very moment when Mary puts herself at the disposal of the plan of God, the curse of Paradise is cancelled and the victory over the devil and death has been gained, for she bears the redemption of the world in her womb.[292] To understand Proclus in the right light one has to see that the clue to his thinking is the idea that salvation comes *through* Mary.[293]

It is typical of Proclus to describe Mary's position using Old Testament prefigurations or types as all his contemporaries do. Like them he also constructs correspondences between Mary and New Testament passages. We see this clearly in Homily 5, in which, besides the Old Testament types,[294] there are also New Testament references.[295] Proclus

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ἔστιν ἴσον ἢ μεῖζον τῆς ἁγίας καὶ Θεοτόκου παρθένου. "There is thus nothing in all the world like the Theotokos Mary. Range your mind over all creation, O man, and see if there is anything greater or even equal to the holy virgin Theotokos." Constas (1994), 221/233: δι' ὅπερ εἴπωμεν πρὸς αὐτὴν· "εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν"· ἡ μόνη τῆς Εὔας θεραπεύσασα τὴν λύπην, ἡ μόνη τὰ τῆς στεναζούσης ἀπομάξασα δάκρυα, ἡ μόνη τὸ κοσμικὸν βαστάσασα λύτρον. "Let us then say to her: 'Blessed are you among women.' You, who alone healed the pain of Eve. You, who alone wiped away the tears of her who was groaning. You, who alone bore the redemption of the world."

[291] E.g. Hom. 3, *PG* 65.705–8; Constas (1994), 164–5/171–5.

[292] Cf. *PG* 65.720C–721AB; Constas (1994), 221–3/233–4.

[293] E.g. Hom. 4, *PG* 65.708C–709AB; Constas (1994), 186–8/196–8.

[294] *PG* 65.720A; Constas (1994), 219/231: The Mount (Sinai), Exod. 19.18; the burning bush, Exod. 3.2; the Jordan River, Ps. 113.3, 5; the Red Sea, Exod. 14.16, 21; the rod of Aaron, Num. 17.8; the three men in the fire in Babylon, Dan. 3.23.

gives Mary the credit for both the miracles related to the Old Testament and the miracles related to Jesus's life: "Count up, then, the miracles (τὰ παράδοξα), and stand in awe before the victory of the virgin, for him whom all the creation praises in fear and trembling she alone contained ineffably in the inner shrine of her womb."[296] To ascribe, for instance, the calming of the storm by Jesus on the lake to Mary's victory[297] means that Proclus sees Mary as a prerequisite of the Incarnation, otherwise his praise of Mary would make no sense.

In Homily 5 (dated to 434–46) which is emphatically a Marian praise, Proclus names five epithets which form the basis of the adoration to Mary: a mother, a servant, a cloud, a bridal-chamber and the ark of the Lord.[298] The interpretation he gives of them reflects the discussion of the nature of Christ, with the exception of the ark which alludes to Moses, the law-giver, as a type of Christ. The interpretation, "an ark, containing not the law, but bearing in her womb the giver of the law", puts Mary in the typological framework. This is a good example of the way in which Proclus links Mary to the Old Testament. She is put concretely 'through the womb' in the middle of the old covenant and the new, implying that salvation occurs through her. In all Christological homilies of Proclus we find corresponding expressions, based on typological references.

Nicholas Constas introduces Proclus as the theologian, who, in exploiting Old Testament foundations in order to secure Mary's place in theology, creates new Marian typologies: "The nearly exhaustive profusion of Old Testament Marian typologies in the writings of Proclus is without precedent in the whole of early Christian literature, and would later determine the basic features of all subsequent Byzantine Mariology."[299] This claim implies that Proclus was the first Mariologist, which the work of F. X. Bauer already suggested,[300] but the position is not yet established through research. However, let us take one example

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[295] Luke 8.22–5, cf. Matt. 8.23–7, Mark 4.35–41; Acts 1.9; Luke 23.45, cf. Matt. 27.45.

[296] *PG* 65.720A; Constas (1994), 220/231–2: ἀρίθμησον τοίνυν τὰ παράδοξα καὶ θαύμασον τῆς Παρθένου τὴν νίκην, ὅτι ὃν πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις φόβῳ καὶ τρόμῳ ὕμνησεν αὕτη μόνη ἀνερμηνεύτως ἐθαλάμευσεν.

[297] Luke 8.22–5, cf. Matt. 8.23–7, Mark 4.35–41. Proclus, Hom. 5, Constas (1994), 231.

[298] *PG* 65.720BC; Constas (1994), 221/233: προσκυνεῖται καὶ ἡ Μαρία ὅτι γέγονε μήτηρ καὶ δούλη καὶ νεφέλη καὶ θάλαμος καὶ κιβωτὸς τοῦ δεσπότου. "Mary is venerated for becoming mother and servant and cloud and bridal chamber and ark of the master."

[299] Constas (1995), 177.

[300] Bauer (1919).

which supports the hypothesis of Proclus's precedence. It is an interpretation Proclus gives of Zechariah 4.1–6:

> "And the angel said to me, 'What do you see?' And I said, 'I looked and saw a lampstand of gold.' " What is this lampstand? It is holy Mary. Why a lampstand? Because she bore the immaterial light made flesh. And why is the lampstand all of gold? Because she remained a virgin even after giving birth. And just as the lampstand is not itself the source of the light but the vehicle of the light, so too, the virgin is not herself God, but God's temple.[301]

According to Constas, this passage was commented on by Hippolytus, Origen, Didymus, Cyril of Alexandria, Ephrem, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, but Proclus exhibits no real dependency on any of them,[302] for none of the preceding theologians connected Mary with the lampstand of Zechariah's vision. Hesychius of Jerusalem, in counting different epithets given to Mary, mentions that she is called a lampstand,[303] but the text does not reveal whether that lampstand refers to Zechariah. Chronologically Proclus's homily could, moreover, have been delivered more than ten years earlier that of Hesychius.[304]

Constas maintains that the Old Testament Marian typologies were "stunningly innovative and provoked euphoric reactions from the late-antique audience".[305] But we may ask whether it was Proclus's rhetorical skill and his enthusiasm for Mary, and not the typologies themselves, which in the first place caused these reactions. All homilists appealed to the Old Testament, not just Proclus, and they used typologies, but not all of them possessed Proclus's ability to put their ideas into words. Anyhow, there are sufficient reasons to suppose that it was Proclus who created a literary model for Marian descriptions, which became stand-

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[301] Constas (1994), 132/153: "καὶ εἶπεν πρός με· τί σὺ βλέπεις; καὶ εἶπον· ἑώρακα καὶ ἰδοὺ λυχνία χρυσῆ ὅλη." τίς ἡ λυχνία; ἡ ἁγία Μαρία. διὰ τί δὲ λυχνία; ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἄϋλον φῶς σαρκωθέντα ἐβάστασεν. διὰ τί δὲ χρυσῆ ὅλη; ἐπειδὴ καὶ μετὰ τόκον παρθένος ἔμεινεν. καὶ ὥσπερ ἡ λυχνία οὐκ αὐτὴ φωτὸς αἰτία, ἀλλὰ φωτὸς ὄχημα, οὕτως καὶ ἡ παρθένος οὐκ αὐτὴ Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ Θεοῦ ναός (*PG* 65.700C).

[302] Constas (1994), 152 n. 62.

[303] Hom. 5, *PG* 93.1461; Aubineau (1978), 158–9: Ἄλλοι δὲ ὁμοίως ἄστομον λυχνίαν ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς ἅπτουσαν. "Likewise others [call her] a lampstand without opening which kindles itself."

[304] Caro dates the homily of Proclus to 420–5, but Barkhuizen (1998), 181–3, maintains that it was most probably delivered during the episcopate of Nestorius (428–31). Aubineau dates the homily of Hesychius to the years immediately after the Council of Ephesus, to 434 or 433.

[305] Constas (1995), 177.

ard in homilies and hymnography. But apparently the model he gave did not concern only the Old Testament Marian typologies, for the same holds good for the figures of speech he constructed on the basis of the New Testament. And perhaps he was most innovative in those which are not based on holy scriptures, but on the patristic conventions of the usage of rhetorical language. Jan H. Barkhuizen's article "Proclus of Constantinople: A Popular Preacher in Fifth-Century Constantinople" supports my notion, for he argues that the high rhetoric of Proclus must have corresponded to his popularity as a preacher.[306]

According to Barkhuizen, the stylistic features which are found in different degrees in the whole corpus of Proclus are as follows: plays on words, assonance, rhyme, antitheses, isocolon, apostrophes and alliterations abound, while his rhythmic, 'Asianic' style also reveals a strong lyrical tendency. Two further characteristics are the brevity of Proclus homilies, and the tendency for short rhythmic sentences, often structured in patterns of parallelism.[307]

This summary presents the most typical rhetorical devices Proclus uses. Precisely these devices cause the strong rhythm for which Proclus is famous,[308] and easily distinguishable from all the other homily writers of the time of Ephesus. At that period there is no other homilist who uses such a high rhetorical style as Proclus. But in the Akathistos we find Proclus's devices most extensively exploited: paronomasia, assonance, rhyme, antithesis, isocolon, alliteration and parallelism. As Filonov Gove points out, in classical rhetoric the kind of parallelism which we find in the Akathistos is called 'paromoeosis' ("the highest lever of parisosis, and includes homoeoteleuton and homoeoptoton").[309] In other words, both Proclus's writings and the Akathistos are strongly characterized by the same stylistic elements, which ensure the rhythm. On the ground of this similarity it seems most likely that Proclus and the author of the Akathistos represent the same school.[310]

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[306] Constas (1995), 179–200.

[307] Barkhuizen (1998), 185. Cf. Leroy (1967), 163–70.

[308] Norden (1958), 855, notes that Proclus's texts are among the most rhythmically marked and ornate of extant sermons from the time.

[309] Filonov Gove (1988), 29; Lausberg (1998). On paromoeosis see §732, on parisosis §719, on homoeoteleuton §725–6, on homoeoptoton §729–31.

[310] Limberis claims that the relationship between the style of Proclus and the Akathistos is especially to be seen in Homily 6: "In fact in style and content the Akathistos Hymn is closest to Proclus's works, especially his sixth oration to the Virgin." (1994: 92). As I have stated earlier, Homily 6 is a compilation reflecting theology and styles of different cen-

There is still one strikingly similar stylistic feature, which is especially worth mentioning, because it is involved in the Christological debate with Nestorius. Leroy notes that in the context of the Incarnation, Proclus has a certain predilection for two antitheses, ἀπάτωρ–ἀμήτωρ and ἄνω–κάτω.[311] As we know, the central strophe of the Akathistos presents the antithesis ἄνω–κάτω (Ὅλος ἦν ἐν τοῖς κάτω καὶ τῶν ἄνω οὐδ' ὅλως ἀπῆν ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος). Leroy continues: "In speaking of the Word, it is not uncommon for Proclus to emphasize the antithesis between the infiniteness of the godhead and the limits assumed in the Incarnation",[312] that antithesis is χωρεῖν–ἀχώρητος. In the first homily Proclus asks: "Who ever saw, who ever heard of God in his infinity dwelling in a womb? Heaven cannot contain him, yet a womb did not constrict him."[313] In the Akathistos again, the same antithesis and idea are applied twice to Mary. It appears in the prooemium ("He who bowed the heavens and came down is contained unchanged but whole in you"), and is found in the form of the epithet "Hail, container of the uncontainable God" (15.6). The placing of the antithesis like this, in the introduction to the hymn and in the central strophe, means that the idea it presents is of greatest significance. There can be no doubt that it points to the Nestorian controversy.

The comparison between Proclus's dogmatical and ethical teaching, and his rhetorical style, with those of the Akathistos Hymn shows that evidence supports the thesis that the author of the Akathistos was a contemporary of Proclus. Proclus was "well-educated and well-versed in Greek rhetoric",[314] the Akathistos again can be considered as a masterpiece of rhetoric. In homiletics after Proclus there are no longer signs of such high rhetoric as he represents. The speculation that the Akathistos was composed after that period does not look reasonable in the light of the facts considered above; the theological themes and stylistic features simply accumulate in such a way that the objectively acceptable refer-

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turies, and it differs most from Proclus's writings which consider the image of Mary. In Homily 6 Mary has been given emotions, feelings, passions, in one word, a personality which is never found in the authentic homilies of Proclus.

311 Leroy (1967), 169.

312 Leroy (1967), 169 (translated).

313 *PG* 65.681B; *ACO* I.1.1.103.22–3: Τίς εἶδεν, τίς ἤκουσεν ὅτι μήτραν ὁ Θεὸς ἀπεριγράπτως ᾤκησεν; ὃν οὐρανὸς οὐκ ἐχώρησεν, γαστὴρ οὐκ ἐστενοχώρησεν.

314 Barkhuizen (1998), 185.

ence is to the context of the Council of Ephesus. But another speculative question may well be put: could Proclus himself be the author?

We know no hymns of Proclus, whatever Vasiliki Limberis may claim.[315] Nor is the rhetorical form of the Akathistos modelled on imperial panegyrics, as her second thesis claims, with which she tries to show the connection between Proclus and the Akathistos.[316] The encomiastic passages in the Marian homilies of Proclus are relatively short and do not reveal whether Proclus could create such a great form as the Akathistos. The intensity of the narration of such a long poem requires great imagination, a quality assigned to Proclus by Norden.[317] However, there are no facts to justify the attribution of the authorship to Proclus.

But Proclus was not only an excellent orator, he was also a very good theologian,[318] who understood the Christological implications of the title 'Theotokos'. It is quite natural that he did not take for granted the teachings of Nestorius. It is also natural that as a native Constantinopolitan he approved the traditional Marian devotion, and defended it against attacks which outraged the feelings of the people of Constantinople. The veneration of Mary was in conformity with ascetical teaching, which again was deeply rooted in the imitation of Mary, so it is only consistent that Proclus argued for Mary's position by appealing to the ideal of chastity. To an ecclesiarch there were no reasons not to promote the growth of the cult of Mary. But after the Council of Ephesus the cult grew so rapidly that it probably was necessary to define the orthodox view of the Theotokos in a form which all could understand. My hypothesis of the relationship between Proclus and the Akathistos Hymn is that as archbishop Proclus was in a position to have commissioned a hymn to the Theotokos, which, besides the adoration and wonder before the divine Incarnation, was intended to exhibit the main points of his teaching of the Virgin Mary.

Date of Composition

Theological points common to the hymn and the period of Ephesus afford confirmation that the hymn originated in that period, whose

[315] Limberis (1994), 62, 86–9, 112, 135, 136, 146.
[316] Limberis (1994), 62, 146.
[317] Norden (1958), 856.
[318] Cf. Grillmeier (1975), 520–3.

particular stamp is emphasized in the hymn's Alexandrian Christology, which is formulated in the manner of Cyril and Proclus and other defenders of the Theotokos: the uncircumscribed Word is contained by the womb of the Virgin, "the container of the uncontainable God". The description of the Incarnation takes into account the Antiochians' critique on Cyril; to avoid any misinterpretation of the condescension of the Logos it states with pointed negation that "not a descent according to place" occurred. The text does not reflect the influence of the *definitio fidei* of Chalcedon either as a whole or in detail.

This indicates a stage of the Christological controversy when the Theotokos issue, concerned with the manner of the Incarnation, dominated the discussion. In this centuries-long controversy the debate on the Theotokos was only a short episode. It began in 428 and was settled by the late 430s, after which the term 'Theotokos' never again became an issue. Given that the theme is the Incarnation, what other context could have provoked such an abundance of triumphant salutations to Mary? It is true that in principle it was possible at any time after the Council of Ephesus to compose a hymn of praise to Mary with salutations alluding to the Council's resolutions. But in the long course of the Christological controversy the the preferred terms and formulations used in discussions of Christ's nature changed. Likewise during those years the cult of Mary strengthened and developed. The Akathistos is a long hymn; if it was written after Chalcedon, it is quite inconceivable that it should not reveal something of the later Christological development, and especially the *definitio fidei* of Chalcedon, for it is well recognized that the early Byzantine period has left us no Christologically neutral texts, and this intellectual masterpiece among hymns was composed by someone who was fully aware of what to write about the Incarnation. My conclusion is therefore that the *terminus ante quem* for the hymn's composition is the Council of Chalcedon of 451.

The hymn's Marian epithets did not emerge merely from the inspiration of the hymnographer; to a large degree they represent the notions of the early Fathers about Mary. But the hymn's image of Mary arises from a synthesis of these epithets within the narrative framework, and to date the hymn requires also a consideration of the internal consistency of the image of Mary and its historical basis.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMAGE: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Research Method

The 'image' of Mary is a totality which consists of three kinds of conceptual expressions: dogma-like terms ('Virgin', 'Theotokos'), established definitions frequently met with in homilies ('container of the uncontainable God'), and less established or occasional epithets ("scent of Christ's fragrance", "guide of the Persians to temperance"). The theological scope of these expressions differs from one to another. The story of the hymn, the narration of incarnation, includes background information, which helps explain the meaning of these expressions. It is clear that the mixture of expressions and the structure they form, and the totality of meaning, is unique; exactly such an entity as the image of Mary of the Akathistos can be found nowhere else. Accordingly, it is independent in the sense that it cannot be exhaustively explained by an image of Mary in some other hymn or homily. Conversely it means that the textual comparisons and the parallels do not 'produce' the image of Mary of the Akathistos. This is the essential fact which has to be taken into consideration in discussing method.

The second aspect of the method which demands attention, since it affects interpretation, becomes patently clear in the matter of the metaphor of the hymn, for the imagery consists to a considerable extent of metaphors not found in the oldest patristic writings. In what way will the meaning of a metaphorical sentence or word be determined? Paraphrase is traditionally used for defining the meaning of metaphor. However, the meaning of metaphor is not the same as paraphrase, because it is the nature of metaphor to say what metaphor alone can express. Amongst the modern philosophers of metaphor Donald Davidson with his uncompromising attitude represents the extremes of this kind of thinking. His thesis is that "metaphors mean what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more".[1] And as regards

[1] Davidson (1978), 32.

paraphrasing, he argues that "what we attempt in 'paraphrasing' a metaphor cannot be to give its meaning, for that lies on the surface; rather we attempt to evoke what the metaphor brings to our attention".[2] I largely agree with Davidson.

The meaning of metaphor is not exclusively a philosophical problem: the analysis requires a consistent treatment, since the salutations alone consist of 144 sentences, which some criteria must make accessible to interpretation. Otherwise there is a risk that the analysis will measure only how knowledgeable the interpreter is. I take the word 'lampstand' (λαμπτήρ, 21.7) as an instance. It is generally known that in hymnography Mary is praised as a lampstand in reference to Exodus 25.31–9. The lampstand belonged to the cult equipment of the tabernacle, and in typological exegesis it was regarded as a type or prefiguration which refers to the economy of salvation as presented by Hebrews 9. All this makes it possible to find several aspects which could elucidate the 'lampstand' as an image of Mary, but all this immediately makes interpretation somewhat arbitrary or accidental.

Thus, before embarking on the analysis an excursion into metaphorical language must be made, and the basic concepts be defined.

The Metaphorical Language

Poetic language is in a logical relationship to the context in which it appears. Such a trivial observation on the contextual ties of language is nonetheless meaningful, as may be seen from the following examples illustrating typical difficulties of interpretation. B. Tomadakis writes thus of the salutations of the Akathistos: "The series of salutations is often not logical; for example in strophe 21 we plunge from the solar world into a (symbolic) bath and a meal."[3] This opinion demonstrates that the hymn's language has not revealed itself to the writer, since he is not familiar with the context in which these linguistic images make sense. For the example he gives is quite logical in connection with the theme of baptism. Jesus's baptism in the Jordan, the feast of Epiphany, the early Christian baptismal customs and their imagery have not entered the mind of Vasiliki Limberis either, since she claims that line 21.11, "Hail,

[2] Davidson (1978), 46.
[3] Tomadakis (1962), 1152 (translated).

that you spring forth the multi-streamed river" (her translation), "is an inexplicable image without any context unless one remembers how extremely important the waterways were to Isis and the Egyptians".[4] Of course a researcher cannot know everything, but it is beholden upon a specialist in Byzantine hymnography (Tomadakis) and in religion and theology (Limberis) to know something of the basic tenets of the Christian faith, among which baptism belongs. There is reason to suspect that the difficulty lies in the nature of metaphor not being understood at all.

The following example shows the problem from a different perspective. K. Mitsakis writes on metaphor in connection with the linguistic analysis of the Akathistos Hymn, that "the metaphors are not only indispensable, but the basic devices of poetic language".[5] Then he categorizes the metaphors of the Akathistos according to their origin, as had been the custom since the days of classical oratory. On this basis the picture of Mary is formed of three parts (A. the world of creation, B. the social life of humankind, C. the Old Testament).[6] Yet this and other such lists of "the basic devices of poetic language" do not tell why Mary is presented by means of these figures of speech, nor what significance these figures have in the hymn as a whole. For example, what integral unity is there between the metaphors "Hail, through whom the creation is made new" (1.16) and "Hail, you who like thunder strike down the enemies" (21.9) in the category of the world of creation? Had we no other information of the salutation verses we could not possibly discern a Christian subject portrayed in these figures of speech. But now we know that these figures of speech derive from a context of the Christian use of language, that in their very origin they were dependent upon the early Christian conceptual systems or categories of thought, further developed within patristic interpretation. This was the ideological framework in which the poet conceived the theme of this hymn. This is particularly clear where the salutation verses form a typology. Thus for example the rhetorical category 'habitations' does not explain why Mary is compared to a tabernacle in the metaphor "Hail, tabernacle of God and the Word" (23.6). Only a tradition of typological interpretation, which has its origin in the Old Testament, allows the string of connections to be explained.

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[4] Limberis (1994), 133.
[5] Mitsakis (1979), 34 (translated).
[6] Mitsakis (1979), 34–5.

On the other hand there is the danger that interpreting within the tradition will bring significances to the metaphor without support from a literal interpretation of the text within its own context. A typical example of this is Paul M. Addison's translation and explanation of 21.12–13 ("Hail, you who prefigure the baptismal font; hail, you who take away the filth of sin."). Addison translates this passage thus: "Rejoice, Pool of Healing where people were bathed as of old; Rejoice, for in you comes the One who now washes our sin" and comments: "Mary is the true Pool of Siloam in whom people find Christ to wash away the diseases of Sin."[7] It is clear that this interpretation, which Addison forms on the basis of well documented patristic materials (the man born blind who washed in the Pool of Siloam, John 9), exceeds the sources of the baptism theme of strophe 21. The Pool of Siloam does not appear in connection with this theme at all, nor does the interpretation relate to what the epithet of Mary, the "baptismal font", literally means in Greek. Pointing to the spring of Siloam may feel sufficient for the explanation of the spiritual significance of these lines. But then there remains in the background the narrative itself, the close context from which the sense of the lines is derived.

Mistaken interpretations of this sort have doubtless confronted everyone. The metaphorical nature of language, which ultimately I consider the reason for the invalid interpretations, is nonetheless something that may be approached rationally.[8] The modern fields in which metaphor has been investigated are aesthetics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of language, philosophy of science and cognitive science. The last three represent areas where the research is nowadays developed.[9] The metaphorical language of the Akathistos, by which the theological claims about Mary are enunciated, gives rise to questions which cannot be sensibly answered on the basis of classical rhetoric. For this reason I have approached the metaphor of the hymn through the propositions of modern theories, whilst basing my concepts firmly on the presentation in Aristotle's *Ars Poetica.*

Janet Martin Soskice affirms in her work *Metaphor and Religious Language* that Aristotle's presentation of metaphor has influenced "almost all

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[7] Addison (1983), 33, 51.
[8] Cf. Young (1997a), 432.
[9] Kittay (1996), 342.

subsequent discussion of metaphor".[10] What then could be a more natural starting point for a scholar of Greek than Aristotle's definition?

> μεταφορὰ δέ ἐστιν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἐπὶ εἶδος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἴδους ἐπὶ τὸ γένος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἴδους ἐπὶ εἶδος ἢ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον.[11]

This definition, cited as being unclear innumerable times, has been translated into English in more and more sophisticated ways, but I shall not start my argumentation from them,[12] since a translation is a mere approximation to the original.[13] Instead of translating, I prefer to explain what I understand by the passage: (1). There exists a context A, from which is taken a word or term *a* and it is transferred into a second context B, possibly even into the place of word or term *b*. (2). In context B the word or term *a* is an outsider, strange (ἀλλοτρίου), because it does not belong to that context.[14] (3). The transfer takes place under known conditions: from the general to the particular, from the particular to the general, from the particular to the particular or analogically. I wish especially to stress that Aristotle calls both the process and its product a 'transfer' (μεταφορά),[15] and that he is expressing the principle whereby words or terms are transferred. It will later become clear that to Aristotle's mind "a successful transfer is the perception of similitude".[16] Central to the *Ars Poetica* is the investigation of the means by which artistic effect is achieved. Once it is understood that the transfer takes place for stylistic reasons, the *Ars Poetica* is of no help in fathoming the significatory

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[10] Soskice (1989), 3.

[11] Aristotle, *De Arte Poetica Liber*, ed. Kassel (1968), 1457b6–9.

[12] E.g. Hubbard (1989), 78: "A 'metaphorical term' involves the transferred use of a term that properly belongs to something else; the transference can be from genus to species, from species to genus, from species to species, or analogical." Halliwell (1987), 55: "Metaphor is the transference of a term from one thing to another; whether from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy."

[13] The key word in the definition is ἐπιφορά (Liddell and Scott 1968: 'a bringing to or upon'), which is particularly important for interpretation, cf. Soskice (1989), 6. For Aristotle the word ὄνομα may signify 'word' and grammatical 'noun'. In present-day usage it would correspond closely to 'the literal use', cf. Halliwell (1987), 159. Liddell and Scott (1968): "μεταφορά, ἡ, *a carrying from one place to another.*"

[14] Liddell and Scott (1968): "ἀλλότριος, *of, belonging to another; foreign, strange, alien.*"

[15] Soskice (1989), 6, is of the opinion that it is impossible to know which Aristotle meant by metaphor, the process or the product.

[16] Poet. 1459^{a}7–8: τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστιν.

content.[17] However, I still consider Aristotle's definition valid as a description of metaphor, since I have never come across a situation where it would not apply. And in fact what more are such well-known theories as Max Black's Interactive Theory or Monroe C. Beardsley's Verbal Opposition Theory than the explanation of a word that does not belong in its context (ἀλλοτρίου)—how an absurd or mistaken word or term or phrase produces a sensible meaning?[18]

Traditionally metaphor is seen on the basis of Aristotle's definition as a transfer of meaning,[19] but in the Greek original there is no 'transfer of meaning': this is interpretation. It is to be affirmed that in transferring a word or term its meaning transfers with it, but because words cannot be separated from their meanings, metaphor as a concept of 'transfer of meaning' is inexact and thus misleading. For when a word or term is moved to a context where it does not belong and in which it becomes 'strange', a meaning *arises* to which nothing in the dictionary corresponds. This is precisely metaphor: a meaning born out of transfer and not a transfer of meaning. Such a meaning born of transfer may live on after the circumstances of its inception, if it is found to be generally applicable.[20] From it may arise a concept and on it may be built new propositions. But in the context of its inception it is unique, because such a transfer as produces its meaning has not taken place before.[21] The meaning arising from the transfer is not replaceable by the imagined word or term into whose place (ἐπιφορά) the other word or term is transferred. It is not a comparison, although the transfer of the word or term is undertaken on the basis of comparison ("from the general to the particular, from the particular to the general, from the particular to the particular or analogically"), since the meaning arising from the transfer does not derive without trace from the identity which is the basis of the

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[17] Cf. Halliwell (1987), 161–2. The same applies to *Ars Rhetorica*, ch. III, which deals with the metaphor of prose and poetry (literary style, γραφική λέξις), cf. *Ars Rhetorica*, ed. Kassel (1976), III.2.1405a8–16.

[18] Cf. Black (1962), (1979), Beardsley (1962), (1967), (1976), (1990).

[19] E.g. Beardsley (1967), 285: "By common definition, and by etymology, a metaphor is a transfer of meaning, both in intension and extension"; Liddell and Scott (1968): "μεταφορά, ἡ, in Rhetoric, *transferring to one word the sense of another*."

[20] For example in writings dealing with metaphor the frequently used sentences are of the sort "the man is a wolf", "the girl is a rose", "men are pigs".

[21] What else could Aristotle's statement mean, that the use of the tool of metaphorical expression cannot be learnt from others? For it is an indication of intelligence or talent (μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἐστὶ λαβεῖν, εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖόν ἐστι), cf. *Ars Poetica* 1459a6–8.

comparison.[22] It is right to call the meaning arising from a transfer metaphorical only in reference to its manner of inception. For the meaning produced by the process of transfer is in itself as literal as the words found in a dictionary, even though it is not found there. Paraphrase may be needed for its comprehension, but paraphrase is not the same as that meaning.

Since 'meaning arising from transfer' can be conceived in different ways, I wish to hone what I have said further. Metaphor is a process of transfer which gives rise to only one meaning. It is essential to it that through it a known observation comes to be expressed with the greatest precision afforded by the resources of language. What metaphor claims is readable on the surface of the sentence, as Davidson expresses the matter.[23] Such is the way with all metaphors. By paraphrase, rephrasing in other words, the idea of a metaphor may certainly be expressed, but not the same meaning. This becomes clear in the Akathistos, in which the idea of Mary's womb as the place of God the Logos is elaborated. Although the idea links for example the metaphors the "chair of the king", the "all holy chariot of him who is above the Cherubim", the "lampstand that never wanes", the "ark, gilded by the Spirit", the words connect Mary to different stories and a separate and single meaning arises for each metaphor. And on the basis of its inception and linguistic function it is to be concluded that there can be no rules for the construction or explication of its meaning. There remains the problem of interpretation, which no theory of metaphor can solve.

I stated that poetic language is in a logical relationship to the context in which it appears. By the context I mean the whole web of material connections within which the metaphor appears: the framework of reference recognizable in the text and on the basis of the genre and sources. Byzantine hymnography proclaims a collectively experienced truth, transmitted by tradition. In this connection the researcher of hymno-

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[22] "Richard is a lion" (assuming that Richard is a human) is not the same as "Richard is like a lion, because he is brave, he is courageous, he has a lion's mane, he roars, etc.", in other words the meaning arising from the transfer is not the same as the sum of characteristics suitable for attributing to a lion. The difference between simile and meaning arising from transfer, i.e. metaphor, becomes clear in that simile is comprehensible in any context as long as the basis of the comparison exists, but the sense of metaphor is bound up with its context of inception. Thus because the context of its inception is inseparably bound up with the meaning of a metaphor, there is inevitably more information in a metaphor than in a simile.

[23] Davidson (1978), 46.

graphy is also in a more comfortable position than a researcher of modern poetry, in that the author's intention in preserved texts is at one with the Church's teaching and interpretative tradition. In other words the hymnographer could not create the picture of Mary in the Akathistos on his own, but depicted her within the framework of given themes which he already 'knew'. The interpretation of a text like the Akathistos thus takes place in a rather well-mapped field, outside which interpretation does not easily wander, since the patristic tradition and the conventions and codes of its linguistic usage are relatively well known.

Despite all this, interpretations such as that of Limberis of line 21.11 have seen the light of day.[24] The verb ἀναβλύζω is indeed found in connection with the flooding of the Nile,[25] but the word, which by chance appears both in pagan and in Christian contexts, affirms nothing. It is clear that Limberis's proposition will not bear criticism. It negates the nearby context, strophe 21, which clearly deals with baptism. It would have been merely a matter of deduction to perceive from the context that the hymnographer confines himself to a Christian framework. In addition Limberis warps the intention of the anonymous author by her proposition, for he could not have departed from the patristic tradition. This case gives pause for thought. If all the foreknowledge which the researcher of a Christian hymn can use for orientation has not sufficed, where does the fault lie? Perhaps not in any one thing: but I claim that at bottom the fault is that the criteria of interpretation are not explicitly set out. If they had been, it would have been necessary to state, from the beginning, in what context the interpretation takes place. Metaphorical language does not in itself justify the researcher in leaping into frameworks or contexts that offer a tempting explanation in difficult passages. If the intention had been to research for example the appearance of the Isis cult in the Akathistos Hymn, then those facts should first have been brought forward which would justify the proposition—a difficult task, which would have foundered on the lack of historical evidence.

When in Christian usage Mary is called a star, we may assume that the significance of this metaphor is not the same as in the tradition of a pagan goddess, although in both cultural contexts the function of the

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[24] χαῖρε, ὅτι τὸν πολύρρυτον ἀναβλύζεις ποταμόν. "Hail, that you spring forth the multi-streamed river" (translation Limberis): "an inexplicable image without any context unless one remembers how extremely important the waterways were to Isis and the Egyptians".

[25] Cf. Liddell and Scott (1968).

star as a heavenly body is the same. The use of the same word does not give the right to claim a foreign meaning for the star in the Christian context, making Mary an astral being. The line of influence has to be shown through conceptual systems. Often when the metaphorical language of a Christian text is examined beside the tradition of antiquity it is also interpreted as reflecting that tradition, even though the motivation for its use is to be found in its own context without searching. In the analysis I will point out that the modern interpretation of the epithet of Mary, "virgin earth", does not correspond to the patristic way of thought. The creator of the Akathistos would be amazed and probably irritated if he knew that in the year 2000 his argument about the nature of Christ could be passed over in favour of myths of the earth goddess. Without evidence of a line of influence it is unscientific to claim that the Christian wordsmith would not have been clear about the suitability of the metaphorical words he used.

The question of the criteria of interpretation is indeed highly important in the analysis of language, for metaphorical language is more suited to awakening associations of ideas than non-metaphorical. Appositely searching for the meaning of metaphor has been compared to solving a riddle. It is banal to say that the criteria must be correct. As a cautionary example consider the picture of Mary produced in the analysis of the metaphor of the Akathistos according to apparently sensible criteria by Mitsakis following the classificatory pattern of classical rhetoric. In this picture there is no explanatory force, because it is not internally coherent and totally ignores the hymn's most striking feature, Mary as the birth-giver of God. The investigation of rhetorical features of the language of the Akathistos is necessary for many reasons, but they do not work as criteria of interpretation for the message of the hymn and its picture of Mary. For the hymnographer has not depicted Mary by using a store of metaphors and dipping into it according to a fixed idea to arrive at the artistically impressive conclusion. Rather, it is to be assumed that the author's intention was to depict Mary in such a way as to communicate through the hymn the view of the Church and its believers on Mary's significance in the Incarnation. All the phrases appearing in the hymn are subservient to this purpose. Thus the metaphorical epithets of Mary are in a logical relationship to this purpose. Although what Mitsakis says is true, that "the metaphors are not only indispensable, but the basic devices of poetic language", yet the metaphors do not have an absolute value which would exceed their purpose of serving the whole. All the types which allude to known stories and

whose meaning is self-evident to anyone that knows the tradition (for example "tabernacle", Exodus 25.8 ff.: an epithet of Mary, 23.6), are from the point of view of interpretation in the same position as all the other words appearing in the hymn: their meaning is to be uncovered from the close context.

I am often struck—dare I say it—by the lack of seriousness with which metaphorical language is approached.[26] I well understand why it is claimed that in a metaphorical statement there is some additional or different meaning on top of the literal meaning,[27] though to my mind such an approach is likely if anything to destroy what is so unique in metaphor. However that may be, a literary work always has a purpose for which it strives, and a message which it transmits, and the point does not change though the language which expresses the purpose should be metaphorical through and through, as in Byzantine hymnography. When Addison comments on the text of the Akathistos by adding to lines 21.12–13 a layer of meaning derived from the narrative favoured in patristic tradition concerning the Pool of Siloam, which is not justified either by the hymn or by the context of strophe 21, then the reader loses his grasp of the narrative of the Akathistos. For the tale of the Pool of Siloam does not in patristic interpretation have any connection with the "exemplar of the baptismal font", as Mary is presented in the context of the Akathistos Hymn's portrayal of baptism. I see that for this type of problem, which is very general, there exists only one practical solution: to set out conceptual criteria of interpretation.[28]

As far as the logic of narration goes, a tale told in poetic or metaphorical language is like any tale told without figurative language, if it is well told. In an entity like the Akathistos, the only sensible basis for the interpretation of the assertions found there is a narrative which is internally consistent and progresses logically from beginning to end. Theological and ideological emphases, on whose basis the text's historical framework emerges, are subservient to the overall purpose. Although

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[26] It is characteristic that according to Beardsley's recommendation ("principle of plenitude") for the interpretation of metaphors and poems, when the alternative interpretations unsuited to the context have been eliminated, "all the connotations that can be found to fit are to be attributed to the poem: it means all it *can* mean, so to say" (Beardsley 1980: 144).

[27] Cf. Davidson (1978), 32.

[28] I have made great use of Göran Hermerén's thoughts on the criteria of interpretation, though this is not evident from my presentation: see Hermerén (1983).

the hymn is "just metaphor", nothing justifies the idea that it is "chaos, which no one can clarify" (an opinion I have heard aired). The formation of metaphor and the task of metaphor in language testify to the boundless creative powers of the human mind. The actual problem of interpretation arises from our not trusting its rationality.

The Concepts

There is a need for objective criteria for the meaningful classification of the expressions and for their assignment to a wider context. In the process, difficulties caused by paraphrasing can be alleviated, although the interpreter must remain aware that the nature of metaphor prevents a complete solution. Where do we derive the interpretative criteria from? As stated, the comparison of the text and its parallels does not 'produce' the image of Mary in the Akathistos; for example, a consideration of the homilies of Proclus will show similarities and differences from the hymn, but does not in itself reveal the conceptual system used by either author in describing the Theotokos. Yet the interpreter must identify that conceptual system at least in part before embarking on the analysis, for it is only knowledge of this system that enables a reasonable and systematic interpretation to take shape. The nature of the conceptual system, a complex subject, must be ascertained first. Even if there is nothing new in this notion, it has profound consequences for the methodology of interpretation.

The normal philological method—to search for sources and parallels in the given context and to show the influence in order to form a coherent image—is not in and by itself sufficient. In addition to this the concepts which are the criteria for the interpretation have to be ascertained. A lexicon or an encyclopaedia does not give them. In the case of the Akathistos, because the dating hypothesis is pre-Chalcedon, it would be a fundamental error to fail to ascertain the Marian concepts with which to operate, for we do not know properly the views of the Fathers on Mary from the period before the Council of Ephesus.[29] The reason is that the image of Mary before Ephesus has not been investigated in de-

[29] The majority of the Mariological studies of today show a more or less explicit tendency to interpret the early image of Mary by using the modern concepts, and this concerns also the Akathistos research.

tail—partly because authentic or convincingly dated texts are lacking, partly because the research interest has mainly been in the development after Ephesus.[30] It is therefore imperative first to set out the Mariological concepts, but it is also useful in that the act of conceptualization yields a better understanding of the way of thinking in the early patristic period.

So, where do we find the criteria, the concepts which form an adequate and objective basis for interpretation? As a summary of encyclopaedic lemmas it can be stated that in the early Christian centuries the following main conceptions of Mary were emphasized: she was holy, she was a virgin, and she was the antitype of Eve or the second (new) Eve. Holiness is not only a property of Mary: all the early Christians were holy, which is why holiness is not appropriate for defining the conceptual profile. The virgin giving birth is based on an Old Testament prophecy and is applicable only to Mary. Therefore it is suitable for defining the profile. Likewise the idea of the second Eve, which is based on typological interpretation of holy scriptures, is applicable only to Mary. These two fundamental concepts are verifiable also in the text of the Akathistos, as well as the epithet Theotokos, whose meaning was strictly defined for the first time in the context of Christology. These three concepts form the natural starting point of the interpretation. But first their content must be examined in order to make evident their core.

The Virgin

The concept of the 'Virgin' is based on the Septuagint translation of the prophecy of Isaiah 7.14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the virgin will be with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel".[31] This text is quoted in Matthew 1.23 and alluded to in Luke 1.31. When Matthew relates the birth of Jesus he asserts (1.22): "All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet".[32] In early Christianity the prophecy of Isaiah constituted an important testimony that the Messiah was born, a testimony which the Jews denied on the ground that the Hebrew word *almah* does not mean παρθένος but νεᾶνις ('young woman'). The counter-argument of the Christian Fathers was that if the reference were

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[30] *Handbuch der Marienkunde* (1996), 124.

[31] διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον· ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ.

[32] τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου.

to a young woman giving birth in an ordinary manner it could not constitute a σημεῖον ('sign').[33] The dispute over the 'virgin of Isaiah' is reflected still in the fifth-century homilies.[34]

Thus, the concept Virgin is basically the paradox of the virgin who is enabled to give birth, a condition for the birth of Christ. Later two other aspects were associated with this concept. The first concerns the nature of Mary's virginity. Speculations on this began early, as the apocryphal literature of the late first and early second century attests.[35] The epithet ἀειπάρθενος ('ever virgin') is a result of such speculations. It means that Mary remains virgin also after conception, during the birth-giving (*in partu*) and after it (*post partum*). Since the word ἀειπάρθενος appears in the documents of Ephesus and Chalcedon only occasionally, it is justified to assume that the notion of the nature of Mary's virginity was not yet established at that time. But it seems to have been established in the beginning of the reign of Justinian, because the epithet ἀειπάρθενος was used systematically in the imperial profession of faith, issued in 527,[36] and in the decrees of the Second Council of Constantinople of 553.[37]

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[33] Cf. Kamesar (1990).

[34] E.g. Proclus, Hom. 2, *PG* 65.696B; Constas (1994), 127/145: Αἰσχυνέσθωσαν Ἰουδαίων παῖδες, οἱ τὴν παρθενικὴν ὠδίνα διασύροντες, οἱ λέγοντες "εἰ ἔτεκε παρθένος οὐκ ἔμεινε παρθένος". "Let the children of the Jews be ashamed who disparage the Virgin's birth pangs saying: 'If a virgin is enabled to give birth she is no longer a virgin.'" *PG* 65.697D–700A; Constas (1994), 131/150: οὐ λέγω σοι ὅτι ἠδύνατο γυνὴ Θεὸν γεννῆσαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἠδύνατο Θεὸς σαρκωθεὶς γεννηθῆναι ὑπὸ γυναικός, "πάντα γὰρ αὐτῷ δυνατά". ὅμως, εἰ ἀπιστεῖς, ὦ Ἰουδαῖε, τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις, ἐντρέπου τὰς τῶν προφητῶν βίβλους, ἔγκυψον ἐν αὐταῖς καὶ βλέπε ὅλον τὸ μυστήριον θεολογούμενον, βλέπε ὅλον τὸ παρθενικὸν θαῦμα σκιαγραφούμενον. "I am not saying that a woman was able to give birth to God, but that God, having become flesh, was able to be born from a woman, for 'all things are possible to him'. But if you doubt my words, O Jew, give heed to the books of the prophets. Inspect them and see the entire mystery theologized, behold the entire mystery of the virgin birth lying in the shadows."

[35] *Ascension of Isaiah* 11.8–14. *Odes of Solomon* 19.6–10. *Protevangelium Jacobi*, cited by Kelly (1989), 492–3.

[36] *Codex Iustiniani* I.1.5: τῆς ἁγίας ἐνδόξου ἀειπαρθένου καὶ Θεοτόκου Μαρίας ... τὴν ἁγίαν ἔνδοξον ἀειπάρθενον Μαρίαν Θεοτόκον ... ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας ... ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας ἀειπαρθένου καὶ Θεοτόκου Μαρίας. "The holy, glorious ever-virgin and Theotokos Mary ... the holy, glorious ever-virgin Mary the Theotokos ... of the holy ever-virgin Mary ... of the holy ever-virgin and Theotokos Mary."

[37] The council's sentence of the "Three Chapters", quae denegant Deum Verbum de sancta Dei genitrice et semper virgine Maria incarnatum hominem factum esse, "which deny that God the Word, taking flesh of the holy Birth-giver of God and ever-virgin Mary, became man" (*ACO* IV.1.214.23–4). Anathema 2: σαρκωθέντος ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας ἐνδόξου Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας καὶ γεννηθέντος ἐξ αὐτῆς "taking flesh of the holy, glorious Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary and being born of her" (*ACO*

The second aspect reflects the ideal of virginity which took Mary's virginity as a paragon of virtue. In the spiritual climate of the fourth and fifth century when asceticism was favoured, the 'fruits' of chastity were projected onto Mary. Therefore, the concept Virgin must be completed with an explicit remark that it comprises every aspect of chastity.

The Second Eve

The concept of the 'Second Eve' emerged in the explanation of salvation history. The idea that Mary is the second or new Eve had sprung up at least two centuries before the Theotokos controversy. Justin Martyr (d. 165) is the first Church Father who is known to have introduced the antithesis Eve–Mary,[38] but probably he was not the innovator.[39] Irenaeus of Lyons (d. *c.* 202) elaborated the theme considerably:

IV.1.240.10–11), anathema 6: Εἴ τις καταχρηστικῶς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀληθῶς Θεοτόκον λέγει τὴν ἁγίαν ἔνδοξον ἀειπάρθενον Μαρίαν ... "If anyone abusively but untruly says of the Theotokos, the holy, glorious, ever-virgin Mary ... (*ACO* IV.1.241.27–8), anathema 14: τῆς ἀρνουμένης μὲν τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας σαρκωθέντα, ἄνθρωπον γεγενῆσθαι "denying God the Word took flesh of the holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary and was born as man" (*ACO* IV.1.244.8–9).

[38] *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo*, *Dial.* 100, *PG* 6.472, 709D–712: καὶ διὰ τῆς Παρθένου ἄνθρωπος γεγονέναι, ἵνα καὶ δι' ἧς ὁδοῦ ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄφεως παρακοὴ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔλαβε, καὶ διὰ ταύτης τῆς ὁδοῦ καὶ κατάλυσιν λάβῃ. Παρθένος γὰρ οὖσα Εὔα καὶ ἄφθορος, τὸν λόγον τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄφεως συλλαβοῦσα, παρακοὴν καὶ θάνατον ἔτεκε. Πίστιν δὲ καὶ χαρὰν λαβοῦσα Μαρία ἡ Παρθένος, εὐαγγελιζομένου αὐτῇ Γαβριὴλ ἀγγέλου, ὅτι Πνεῦμα Κυρίου ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἐπελεύσεται, καὶ δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει αὐτήν· διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἐξ αὐτῆς ἅγιόν ἐστιν Υἱὸς Θεοῦ, ἀπεκρίνατο· "Γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμὰ σου." Και διὰ ταύτης γεγέννηται οὗτος, περὶ οὗ τὰς τοσαύτας Γραφὰς ἀπεδείξαμεν εἰρῆσθαι, δι' οὗ ὁ Θεὸς τόν τε ὄφιν καὶ τοὺς ὁμοιωθέντας ἀγγέλους καὶ ἀνθρώπους καταλύει· ἀπαλλαγὴν δὲ τοῦ θανάτου τοῖς μεταγινώσκουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν φαύλων καὶ πιστεύουσιν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐργάζεται. "And to become man through the Virgin, in order that just as through this means the disobedience arising from the serpent took its beginning so too through this means it should take its destruction. For as a chaste virgin Eve embraced the word arising from serpent and gave birth to disobedience and sin. But Mary the Virgin, taking up faith and joy, as the angel Gabriel announced glad tidings to her, that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her and the power of the Highest overshadow her, wherefore the one born of her is the holy Son of God, replied: 'Let it be to me according to your word.' And through her was born he about whom we have shown the Scriptures to speak, through whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who have made themselves of like sort; he works deliverance from death for those who repent of sordid deeds and believe in him." (Note the play on λαμβάνω, "take" and συλλαμβάνω, "conceive, embrace", which is not rendered with full force in the translation.)

[39] Kelly (1989), 493.

Like the Lord, the Virgin Mary is also found obedient when she says, "Behold your servant, Lord, may it be for me according to your word" (Luke 1.38), but Eve, disobedient, for she disobeyed while still a virgin. For just as Eve had Adam for a husband but was still a virgin . . . and by disobeying became the cause of death for herself and the whole human race, so also Mary with a husband predestined for her but yet a virgin, was obedient and became the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race. For this reason the Law calls the one betrothed to a man the wife of the one betrothing her, even though she is still a virgin, signifying the recycling that Mary effected for Eve. For what has been tied cannot be loosed unless one reverses the ties of the knot so that the first ties are undone by the second, and the second free the first: thus it happens that the first tie is unknotted by the second and the second has the place of a tie for the first. This is why the Lord said that the first would be the last and the last first (Matt. 19.39; 20.16); and the prophet indicates the same thing by saying, "In place of the fathers that they were, they became your sons" (Ps. 45.16). For the Lord, becoming the First-born from the dead (Col. 1.18) and receiving the ancient fathers into his bosom, regenerated them into the life of God, himself becoming the first of the living because Adam had become the first of the dead. This is why Luke (3.23–38) began his genealogy with the Lord to trace it back from him to Adam, thus indicating the fathers did not give life to the Lord but he regenerated them in the Gospel of life. So too the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by Mary's obedience, for what the virgin Eve had bound by her unfaith, the virgin Mary loosed by her faith.[40]

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[40] Translation by Grant (1997): 140–1; *Adversus Haereses* III.22.4: Consequenter autem et Maria uirgo obaudiens inuenitur dicens: *Ecce ancilla tua, Domine, fiat mihi secundum uerbum tuum.* Eua uero inobaudiens: non obaudiuit enim adhuc cum esset uirgo. Quemadmodum illa uirum quidem habens Adam, uirgo tamen adhuc existens . . . inobaudiens facta, et sibi et uniuerso generi humano causa facta est mortis, sic et Maria habens praedestinatum uirum, et tamen Virgo obaudiens, et sibi et uniuerso generi humano causa facta est salutis. Et propter hoc lex eam quae desponsata erat uiro, licet uirgo sit adhuc, uxorem eius qui desponsauerat uocat, eam quae est a Maria in Euam recirculationem significans: quia non aliter quod colligatum est solueretur, nisi ipsae conpagines adligationis reflectantur retrorsus, uti primae coniunctiones soluantur per secundas, secundae rursus liberent primas, et euenit primam quidem compaginem a secunda colligatione solui, secundam uero colligationem primae solutionis habere locum. Et propter hoc Dominus dicebat primos quidem nouissimos futuros et nouissimos primos. Et Propheta autem hoc idem significat dicens: *Pro patribus nati sunt tibi filii. Primogenitus* enim *mortuorum* natus Dominus et in sinum suum recipiens pristinos patres, regenerauit eos in uitam Dei, ipse initium uiuentium factus, quoniam Adam initium morientium factus est. Propter hoc et Lucas initium generationis ad Domino inchoans in Adam retulit, significans quoniam non illi hunc, sed hic illos in Euangelium uitae regenerauit. Sic autem et Euae inobaudientiae nodus solutionem accepit per obaudientiam Mariae. Quod enim adligauit uirgo Eua per incredulitatem, hoc Virgo Maria soluit per fidem.

It is attested also in Tertullian (d. after 220).[41] They all thought in the same way: Eve was the type of Mary. The Virgin Mary was obedient and faithful and Eve, also then a virgin, disobedient and faithless. Eve's disobedience was the cause of the Fall and Mary's obedience became the cause of salvation. It is noteworthy that the parallel Eve–Mary is not based on the comparison Adam–Christ.[42]

I shall argue that this basic parallel of Eve–Mary developed over the course of the centuries so that further features were associated with the concept of Mary as the second Eve in patristic thought by the beginning of the fifth century: this topic has not in fact been discussed in Mariological literature. I regard Irenaeus's theory of recapitulation (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις)[43] as forming the basis for elucidating the likely understanding of the fifth-century Fathers, for the theory of recapitulation became the most favoured explanation of universal history realized in the Incarnation; for instance Proclus's first homily reflects it clearly. To put the theory in simple terms: when the first man had fallen in Paradise, God as *philanthropos* wanted to redeem mankind from doom and

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[41] *Liber de Carne Christi*, *SC* 216.XVII.4–5, *PL* 2.782: Sed et hic ratio defendit, quod Deus imaginem et similitudinem suam a diabolo captam *aemula operatione* recuperauit. In uirginem enim adhuc Euam irrepserat uerbum aedificatorium mortis; in uirginem aeque introducendum erat dei uerbum structorium uitae; ut quod per eius modi sexum abierat in perditionem, per eundem sexum redigeretur in salutem. Crediderat Eua serpenti: credidit Maria Gabrieli. Quod illa credendo deliquit, ista credendo correxit. "But the argument also runs that through a matching operation God restored his image and likeness which had been captured by the devil. For into the virgin Eve had crept the word which builds a home for death; into a virgin likewise was to be introduced the word of God, the builder of life; so that what had gone to perdition through her sex might be restored to salvation through the same sex. Eve had trusted in the serpent: Mary trusted in Gabriel. What the one lost by believing the other restored by believing."

[42] *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, s.v. "Maria, Dogmengeschichte".

[43] The basic idea of recapitulation was derived from Paul (Rom. 5.12–21; 1 Cor. 15.22, 45). It is to be noted that the theory of ἀνακεφαλαίωσις of Irenaeus is not one consistent theory; the theory was previously indeed not considered consistent, but this view seems to have changed. Consult Grant's introduction to Irenaeus's concepts in Irenaeus (trans. Grant, 1997), 46–53: "Rhetoric in Theology", esp. 52–3. In Irenaeus's work *Adversus Haereses* and particularly in its third book the themes which are most important to our study are dealt with: the Incarnation, the Incarnation as recapitulation: Christ and Mary, and the role of the Virgin Mary (chapters 19.1, 19.3, 20.2, 21.9, 21.10, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 23.3, 23.5). In Irenaeus's *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* a summary of the doctrine of recapitulation (32–43) is found. It is especially valuable, because Irenaeus presents the main points of the topic (trans. Robinson 1920: 98–101). Cf. Kelly (1989), 170–4, 376–7, 395. The passage of Tertullian, cited above, shows that he understood the significance of Mary as the second Eve according to the theory of recapitulation ("aemula operatio").

death and restore him to his original state of glory. This theory in fact implies that God has a plan of redemption (*oikonomia*)[44] and the prefigurations, the types (τύποι),[45] included in the prophecies and writings of the Old Testament, were seen as testimony to this plan. For the interpretation of the holy scripture the technique of typological exegesis was employed,[46] a method which originally developed within the eschatology of later Judaism.[47] Against this background it is understandable if the typological way of thinking implies an eschatological perspective; the complete meaning of a type is identifiable in its antitype with respect to the eschatological future of salvation. As for the Second Eve, the completion of the significance of Eve would be realized in Mary, i.e. the restoration of creation into its paradisal condition.[48]

Mary as assistant in the Incarnation plays a necessary part in the redemptive plan of God.[49] When Proclus in his first homily begins the treatment of the Incarnation theme his point of departure is the parallel Eve–Mary. Even if the Fathers are not explicit, it is clear that without Mary the whole process cannot take place.[50] The plan of redemption started on earth at the moment when Mary assented to Gabriel's announcement, not at the moment of the birth-giving. The positive answer of the second Eve became a prerequisite of the Incarnation as well as of its consequences: the Second Parousia of Christ, the rising up of the dead on judgement day, the Last Judgement and the recreation of the world. So, Mary's words, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word", carry through to the end of the age, when the whole human race since Adam and Eve will be waiting

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[44] Cf. Kelly (1989), 104, 110–11. "From meaning (Eph. 3.9) the divine plan, or God's secret purpose, the word (oikonomia) became applied in Christian theology to the Incarnation, the goal of the divine purpose." (p. 110). Cf. also Grant (1997), 49–50.

[45] A type (τύπος) is a real historical person, thing, institution or event, which God himself was understood to have established as a prefiguration, cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, s.v. "Typos". This view of the type has been shown by Young (1997b), esp. 192–201, to be insufficient.

[46] Young (1997b), 193: "Typology ... is not an exegetical method, but a hermeneutical key."

[47] Goppelt (1939), 157–63. Cf. Kelly (1989), 71.

[48] E.g. Proclus calls Mary "the spiritual Paradise of the second Adam" (ὁ λογικὸς τοῦ δευτέρου Ἀδὰμ παράδεισος, *ACO* I.1.1.103.12).

[49] E.g. Cyril, Hom. 12, "In Occursum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi", *PG* 77.1048C: Εὐλογεῖ δὲ Συμεὼν τὴν ἁγίαν Παρθένον, ὡς ὑπηρετήσασαν θείᾳ βουλῇ, καὶ ὑπουργήσασαν τόκῳ. "Symeon blesses the holy Virgin for serving the divine will and assisting by means of childbirth."

[50] Cf. Benko (1993), 244–5.

for the fulfilment of God's promises. I think that this overall scheme corresponds better to the notions of the Fathers about the role of the second Eve in the economy of salvation than the mere antithesis Eve–Mary.

The idea that God has a plan is to be found also in the expression "for us humans and for our salvation (he came down and became incarnate)"[51] in the creed of Nicaea (325). That passage has been completed with the notion of Mary's soteriological role in the Incarnation in the so-called Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, which may date from the First Council of Constantinople of 381.[52] This creed the Council of Chalcedon confirmed: "For us humans and for our salvation he came down from the heavens and became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary."[53] The *definitio fidei* of Chalcedon again connects the plan of God and Mary's role with the human nature of Christ: "In the last days the same [Christ] was born in his humanity for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin Birth-giver of God."[54]

Both the Nicene and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creeds were originally baptismal creeds. In the acts of Chalcedon one can read how the bishops cried out after the exposition of the faith held at Nicaea: "This is the faith of true believers. In this we all believe. Into this we have been baptized, and into this we baptize."[55] Since baptism was understood to belong to the process of 'repairing' the Fall, I suppose that the concept Second Eve involved a baptismal aspect as a natural continuation of the thought that Mary has a share in the plan of redemption. The aspect of baptism is found in a text of Didymus of Alexandria (d. 398):

> For she is the baptismal font of the Trinity, the workshop of salvation of all believers; and those who bathe therein she frees from the bite of the serpent and she becomes mother of all, a virgin dwelling in the Holy Spirit

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[51] Tanner (1990), 5; *ACO* II.1.2.79: Πιστεύομεν ... τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα.

[52] *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, s.v. "Constantinople I".

[53] Tanner (1990), 24; *ACO* II.1.2.128: τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτήριαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα.

[54] Tanner (1990), 86; *ACO* II.1.2.129.24–30: ἐκδιδασκομεν ... πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα.

[55] *ACO* II.1.2.79.27–8: Αὕτη ἡ πίστις τῶν ὀρθοδόξων. ταύτῃ πάντες πιστεύομεν. ἐν ταύτῃ ἐβαπτίσθημεν, ἐν ταύτῃ βαπτίζομεν.

> . . . in her we receive all the favours of largess, and there the gifts of Paradise are assigned, and he who created her takes to himself our soul as a bride . . . and he has given me the baptismal font to be a mother, the Most High to be a father, and the Saviour baptized for our sakes as a brother.[56]

This allegorical passage shows that Didymus regards the baptismal font or the Virgin as the second Eve ("she frees from the bite of the serpent"). Didymus thinks that baptism is a matter of double participation: the baptized participate in the divine relationship and have a share in the promised gifts. The baptismal font refers to the rebirth of the baptized, which results both in spiritual regeneration in the present time and in perfection in eschatological time. These matters are contained one within the other: "the baptismal font . . . and those who bather therein she frees from the bite of the serpent" referring to the present time, and "there the gifts of Paradise are assigned" to the eschatological future. Because the baptismal font is the 'spiritual mother', it is natural that the baptized receive the Saviour as brother. A new theory on the origins of the Epiphany corroborates my notion that we have to complete the eschatological aspect of the Second Eve with the baptismal aspect. Merja Merras spells out the idea of the Epiphany in the following way:

> The origins of Epiphany obviously lie in the idea of Redemption. Christ's carnal birth and his baptism as the prototype of the baptism of every Christian are closely connected, and they were both seen as necessary to reach the goal: Paradise lost. In the minds of the first Christians the Old Testament promises turned into the fulfilment of a new era: God's doxa—his Son—descending to the earth, and in consequence the possibility of restoring human beings to their former glory by means of baptism. These two notions form the primary and basic content of the early Feast of Epiphany.[57]

From this we can see that the appropriateness of baptism is revealed wholly only when it is considered from the perspective of the eschatological future—when the promises of God are fulfilled. To consider a matter in such a retrospective way, by beginning with its final outcome,

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[56] *De Trinitate* II.XIII, *PG* 39.692AB: Ἔστι γὰρ ἡ κολυμβήθρα τῆς Τριάδος, ἐργαστήριον πρὸς σωτηρίαν πιστῶν πάντων ἀνθρώπων· καὶ τοὺς λουομένους ἐν αὐτῇ, τοῦ δήγματος ἀπαλλάττει τοῦ ὄφεως, καὶ μήτηρ πάντων γίνεται, τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι μένουσα Παρθένος. Ἐν αὐτῇ γὰρ, ὡς εἴρηται, πάντα ὑποδεχόμεθα τῆς διανομῆς τὰ χαρίσματα, καὶ ἐκεῖσε τοῦ παραδείσου αἱ δωρεαὶ ὑπογράφονται, καὶ νύμφην ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἡμετέραν ψυχὴν λαμβάνει ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὴν. ... Καὶ ἔδωκέ μοι, φησὶ, μητέρα τὴν κολυμβήθραν, πατέρα τὸν Ὕψιστον, ἀδελφὸν τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς βαπτισθέντα Σωτῆρα.

[57] Merras (1995).

logically makes one see the emergence of the result, the causalities of events, and even the result already in the initial cause. Consequently, quite naturally, Mary's womb where the Incarnation originates was considered as an original place of baptism, a partial element of Christ's work of redemption. On the other hand, the womb became a synonym of baptism.[58] That is why Didymus may call Mary a baptismal font, which "frees from the bite of the serpent those who bathe in it". In terms of this retrospective thinking Proclus can describe Mary by the attribute "the baptismal font giving birth".[59] Before infant baptism became common around 600, baptism as an initiation into Christian life was a very concrete series of rites, which prepared the adult catechumenate for the first communion in the eucharist.[60] It is probable that like the expression of Didymus, τοὺς λουομένους ἐν αὐτῇ, other elements of the ritual of baptism were also bound up with the Second Eve. By elements of baptism I mean concrete references to baptism or its significance, e.g. baptismal font, spring, water, clothing, clothing in glory, cleansing from filth, regeneration in the spirit, illumination, partaking of holy communion, and so forth.

What I have sketched above can now be summed up. The typological way of thinking originally gave rise to the parallel Eve–Mary and the idea of Mary as the second Eve. This idea was further developed in the framework of the theory of recapitulation. The concept Second Eve is based on Mary's role as obedient servant of God; the words of Mary were understood as the prerequisite for the Incarnation. In the speculations on the consequences of Christ's first Parousia the eschatological and baptismal aspects were associated with it.

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[58] E.g. Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on Virginity" 7, strophe 7: "They descended in debts as filthy ones and ascended pure as babes since they have baptism, another womb." Ephrem (trans. McVey, 1989), 294. Proclus uses the womb figure in giving a list of the Christian feasts, Hom. 3, *PG* 65.705B; Constas (1994), 163/169–70: Ἡ μὲν γὰρ πρώτη ἡμῶν πανηγύρις, Θεοῦ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίαν κηρύσσει. Ἡ δὲ μετ' ἐκείνην, ὑδάτων ἁγιασμὸν καὶ βαπτίσματος εἰκονογραφεῖ μήτραν. "The first day of our feast proclaims the advent of God among men. The second represents the sanctification of the waters, and the womb of baptism." Cf. Constas (1994), 170 n. 18.

[59] Hom. 5, *PG* 65.721A; Constas (1994), 222/234: καὶ ἡ κολυμβήθρα τίκτουσα οὐ κάμνει "and the baptismal font gives birth without tiring".

[60] *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, s.v. "Baptism".

The Theotokos

The term 'Theotokos' did not originate in holy scripture or its interpretation, as is the case with the two other concepts. Marek Starowieyski has proposed hypotheses on the origin of this word in the article, "Le Titre Θεοτόκος avant le concile d'Ephèse".[61] Starowieyski collected more than sixty texts, which are presumed to have been written before the conflict with Nestorius (428).[62] The term may have appeared for the first time in the writings of Origen (d. *c.* 254), probably in his exegesis of Romans 1.13, when he deliberates in what sense Mary can be called the Theotokos.[63] Starowieyski draws the conclusion that if the passage of Origen had been an explication of the term 'Theotokos', it would have been used in the controversy against Nestorius.[64] The term became popular at the time of the Arian controversies when Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373) frequently employed it.[65] Starowieyski argues that the title 'Theotokos' was mainly a mere title of honour before Gregory of Nazianzus, Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. These three theologians connect the title with Christology.[66]

As a Christological term 'Theotokos' is known from the Council of Ephesus. The council did not compose any other formulation concerning the Theotokos. Thus in this conciliar text the word 'Theotokos' must be understood in its literal sense, 'Birth-giver of God'; its synonym is not the 'Mother of God' (μήτηρ θεοῦ).[67] In the documents of Ephesus the term 'Theotokos' is mentioned 177 times and in those passages it implies no mental dimension, no activity, no personality.[68]

So, at the time of the Nestorian controversy, the term was a technical expression, which pointed to the place where the hypostatic union took place; it was the womb, a space, the χώρα, which contained God. The Theotokos as χώρα is a concept which refers to the philosophical discussion on the nature of God. The question Proclus puts in his homily is

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61 Starowieyski (1987).

62 Starowieyski (1987), 238.

63 Starowieyski (1987), 236–7.

64 Starowieyski (1987), 240.

65 Benko (1993), 250. Cf. Lampe (1961): "Θεοτόκος. A. Before 5th-cent. Christol. controversies, gen. as adj."

66 Starowieyski (1987), 239.

67 I do not agree with Percival (1991), 210, who argues for the "Mother of God", because the exact translation "Birth-giver of God" is not English! Cf. Benko (1993), 253–6, on the meaning of the term 'Theotokos' in connection with the Council of Ephesus.

68 *TLG* search.

typical of that discussion: "Who ever saw, who ever heard of God in his infinity dwelling in a womb? Heaven cannot contain him, yet a womb did not constrict him."[69] This question is not only rhetorical: it reflects the descriptions of God's essence ever since the *Apology* of Aristides of Athens to the emperor Hadrian (117–38).[70] It is quite conceivable that if God, according to definition, is ἀχώρητος ('uncontainable, not assignable to a space'), it raises the kind of a philosophical problem which Proclus proposes. The idea appears also in a hymn of Ephrem the Syrian. I shall quote a lengthy passage of that hymn (Nat. 21.6–8) to point out that already Ephrem exploits fully the paradox of the container of the uncontainable:

> (6) The Power that governs all dwelt in a small womb.
> While dwelling there, He was holding the reins of the universe.
> His Parent was ready for His will to be fulfilled.
> The heavens and all the creation were filled by Him.
> The Sun entered the womb, and in the height and depth
> His rays were dwelling.
>
> (7) He dwelt in the vast wombs of all creation.
> They were too small to contain the greatness of the First-born.
> How indeed did that small womb of Mary suffice for Him?
>
> . . .
>
> Of all the wombs that contained Him, one womb sufficed:
> [the womb] of the Great One Who begot Him.
>
> (8) The womb that contained Him, if it contained all of Him,
> is equal to the wonderful womb that is greater than [the womb] of His birth.
> But who will dare to say that a small womb,
> weak and despised, is equal to [the womb] of the Great Being?
> He dwelt [there] because of His compassion and since His nature is great,
> He was not limited in anything.[71]

In the *Apology* the thought that "the heavens do not contain Him" was directed against Stoic pantheism.[72] In an anonymous homily of the years

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69 *PG* 65.681B; *ACO* I.1.1.103.22–3.

70 Cf. Kelly (1989), 84. Lampe (1961): "ἀχώρητος, *not to be contained*, 1. in space, *infinite, unlimited*, a. of God ὁ Θεός, πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δε ἀχώρητος ὤν Herm. *Mand.*I.I; of Father τὸν ἀχώρητον πατέρα χωρητὸν διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως ὑποτίθενται *Symb.Ant.* anno 345, *PG* 26.732C; b. of Son ἀχώρητος ἐστι καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὡς ὁ πατήρ, καὶ πάντα περιέχει Hippol. pasch. 3, *PG* 10.701B; esp. ref. Inc. ἀχώρητος ἂν τῇ φύσει γίνεται χωρητός Thdt. *Ezech.* 3:12(2.703); c. of H. Ghost ἀχώρητον, ἀναλλοίωτον, ἄποιον Gr.Naz. *Or.* 41.9, *PG* 36.441B."

71 Ephrem (trans. McVey, 1989), 174–5. Cf. Ephrem (trans. Beck, 1959), 95–6.

372–6 a question, "how the uncontainable is contained in the womb of the Virgin", is addressed to Arius.[73] It is, of course, an argument for the nature of Christ, and it must have been important, because it is repeated also in another passage.[74] The same paradox appears in the homilies of Hesychius of Jerusalem at the beginning of the fifth century.[75] And it was relevant in the Ephesian context because, besides Proclus,[76] the argument 'the container of the uncontainable' appears with slight variations in the texts of the most famous defenders of the Theotokos in Ephesus: Cyril of Alexandria,[77] Theodotus of Ancyra,[78] Antipater of Bostra,[79] Pseudo-Athanasius,[80] 'Basil of Seleucia',[81] Chrysippus of Jerusalem[82] and Pseudo-Epiphanius.[83]

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[72] Kelly (1989), 84.

[73] *PG* 62.768 ὦ Ἄρειε, εἰπέ μοι, ὦ ἄθλιε, πῶς ἐχωρήθη ὁ ἀχώρητος ἐν μήτρᾳ παρθενικῇ; This homily, Pseudo-Chrysostom, "In Annuntiationem Deiparae et contra Arium Impium", *PG* 62.763–70, is dated by Caro. It is number 4 in Caro's list (1971–3), 684.

[74] *PG* 62.766: Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξὶν ... ὅτι τὸν ἀχώρητον βουληθέντα κεχώρηκας. "Blessed are you among women ... for you have contained the uncontainable one according to his will."

[75] Hom 4, *PG* 93.1453AB = Aubineau (1978), Hom. 6.1.4–8: Ἡ δὲ παροῦσα νῦν ἡμέρα τῆς ἑορτῆς ὑπερένδοξος. Παρθένου γὰρ περιέχει πανήγυριν, ἥτις τοσοῦτον ὑπερέβαλε πάσας, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον ἐθέλοντα ὑποδέξασθαι χωρηθέντα παρ' αὐτῆς ἀστενοχωρήτως. "Today's feast is supremely glorious: it concerns the feast in honour of a Virgin who surpasses all women in receiving God the Logos himself, voluntarily to be contained by her without constriction". 1456B = Aubineau 6.4.6: Πῶς ἡ τῆς μήτρας τὸν ἀχώρητον ἐχώρησε φύσις. "How the womb by nature contains the uncontainable one." No. 19, date 410–26; Hom. 6, *PG* 93.1469A = Aubineau 1.2.16–17: ἐχώρησεν ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ τὸν Θεόν, ὃν ἡ κτίσις χωρῆσαι οὐ δύναται. "Her womb contained the God whom the universe cannot contain." No. 12, date 410–20.

[76] Hom. 4, *PG* 65.709B; Constas (1994), 187/197: Δεῦτε ἴδωμεν γαστέρα Παρθένου πλατυτέραν τῆς κτίσεως. ὁ γὰρ ἐκεῖ μὴ χωρούμενος, ἐνταῦθα ἀστενοχωρήτος ἐχώρησε. "Come and behold the womb of a virgin wider than creation, for the one whom [creation] could not contain is contained in her without restriction." No. 18 in Caro's list, date 26 XII 426. Pseudo-Chrysostom = Procl.CP, Hom. "In Christi Natalem Diem", *PG* 61.737: Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη, τῆς ἀχωρήτου φύσεως χωρίον εὐρυχώρον ... ἡ τὸν ἀχώρητον ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἔχουσα Θεὸν ἀχώρητον καὶ ἀστενοχώρητον. "Hail, favoured one, the space of the uncontainable one by nature ... you, in whom the containable God in heaven was infinite and without restriction." No. 37, date 434–46.

[77] Cf. no. 30, date 28–30.vi.431.

[78] Hom. 4, "In Sanctam Deiparam et in Simeonem", *PG* 77.1393C: Χαίροις, χώρημα ἐλάχιστον, χωρήσασα τὸν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀχώρητον. "Be hailed, you the smallest space, who contained the uncontainable one whom all things together cannot contain." No. 23, date 429.

[79] Hom. 1, "In Sanctum Ioannem Baptistan, et in Silentium Zacchariae, et in Salutationem Deiparae", *PG* 85.1765AB: Τοῦ Παραδείσου ὁ Θεὸς ἐχώρισε τὸν πρωτόπλαστον,

We may understand why this argument was persistently used by the opponents of Nestorius, but it deserves another study to clarify its development from the philosophical definitions of God's essence up to the epithet χώρα ἀχωρήτου ('container of the uncontainable') of Mary. Were the problems, which remained unsolved in the fourth-century controversies, reflected in this argument in the Nestorian controversy? The interpretation of the 'container' is related today to Hebrews 9.1–7, which signifies that the Theotokos is the living temple of the godhead, because the "mystery of the Incarnation is realized in a mother's womb".[84] It is easy to associate such an explanation with the idea of the *formula reunionis*, in which the temple refers to the Theotokos.[85] However, no reference to Hebrews 9.1–7 is to be found in the letter of Cyril. It is clear that the epithet χώρα ἀχωρήτου did not originally arise in typology, but was later rationalized by the type of the temple of the old covenant. That reasoning was needed in the Nestorian controversy, and

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καὶ αὐτὸν ἐχώρησεν ἡ τούτου ἀπόγονος! "God separated from Paradise the first-formed and his descendant contained him himself!" No. 40, date 450–70.

[80] "In Nativitatem Christi", *PG* 28.969D: ἐκυοφορήθη ὁ ἀχώρητος ἐν χωρητικῷ σκεύει, ἐν τῇ μήτρᾳ τῆς Παρθένου οἰκονομικῶς, ὡς ηὐδόκησε. "The uncontainable one was carried in an earthly vessel, in the womb of the Virgin by divine dispensation, as God saw that it was good." No. 22, date 429. According to Caro (1971–3), 27, the homily of Pseudo-Athanasius is extremely important in the Ephesian context, far more important than the homilies of Theodotus of Ancyra or Acacius of Melite.

[81] Hom. 39, "In Sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem", *PG* 85.444D–445A: μὴ γὰρ ἔχεις οὐρανοῦ πλατυτέραν γαστέρα. ... Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ τοιαύτη δύναμις ἐπισκιάσῃ σοι, οὐ δυνήσῃ χωρεῖν τὸν ἀχώρητον. "You would not have a womb wider than heaven. ... For if such power [of the Highest] did not overshadow you, you would not be able to contain the uncontainable." No. 38, date *ante* 449.

[82] "In Sanctam Mariam Deiparam", *PO* 19.336: Χαῖρε, ἡ μήτραν λαχοῦσα παρὰ τῆς φύσεως καὶ αὐτῶν πλατυτέραν τῶν οὐρανῶν, εἴπερ ὃν μὴ χωροῦσι μηδὲ οἱ οὐρανοὶ, σὺ διὰ ταυτῆς ἐχώρησας. "Hail to you, who obtained by nature a womb which is wider than the heavens: by means of it you contained the one whom not even the heavens can contain." No. 39, date 450–70.

[83] Hom. 5, "In Laudes Sanctae Mariae Deiparae", *PG* 43.489D–492A: Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ λαμπρὸς οὐρανός, ἡ τὸν ἀχώρητον ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἔχουσα Θεόν. ... Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, κύκλον ἔχουσα οὐρανοῦ, καὶ Θεὸν ἀχώρητον, ἐν σοὶ δὲ χωρητὸν καὶ ἀστενοχωρήτον. "Hail, favoured one, brilliant heaven, you who hold the uncontainable God in heaven. ... Hail, favoured one, who contain the orbit of heaven and the uncontainable God without constriction." 43.497AB: ὦ γαστὴρ οὐρανόν κύκλον ἔχουσα, καὶ Θεόν ἀχώρητον ἐν σοὶ δὲ χωρητὸν βαστάσασα. ὦ γαστὴρ οὐρανοῦ πλατητέρα, Θεὸν τὸν ἐν σοὶ μὴ στενοχωρήσασα. "O undefiled womb, you who contain the orbit of heaven and carry the uncontainable God in spatial dimensions. O womb, wider than heaven, you who did not cirmumscribe God." No. 49, date fifth century.

[84] Briere (1985), 22.

[85] ἐξ αὐτῆς ληφθέντα ναόν.

thereafter occurred a process adumbrated by Elisabeth Briere: "Over the centuries the 'container' imagery has tended to be shifted from Christ's body to Mary—a tendency which scandalized Nestorians in every era."[86]

The following distinction can be made between the concepts Theotokos and Virgin: characteristic of the former is the paradox of the 'container of the uncontainable', χώρα ἀχωρήτου, whereas characteristic of the latter is the paradox of the virgin giving birth. Both of them deal with a divine mystery, and they are based on the notion that an event, which exceeds human capabilities, happened to Mary. Compared with the concept Second Eve the difference is striking. Mary in the role of the servant of the Lord, as the Second Eve, is the active human agent, whose answer is the decisive action. We can see now that these three basic concepts are distinguishable. Their history and their function differ from each other, and therefore they are suitable tools for defining the basic structure of the image.

The basic concepts are:

The Virgin is the paradox of the virgin giving birth. It comprises every aspect of chastity.

The Second Eve is a prerequisite for the Incarnation or the economy of salvation. It includes an eschatological and a baptismal aspect.

The Theotokos witnesses to the nature of Christ. It is the paradox of the 'container of the uncontainable'.

Analysis

In the analysis the structure of the image of Mary implicit in the hymn's narrative will be distinguished according to the three concepts. Then the other possible conceptual elements emerge in the rest of the text and will be interpreted in the contexts concerned. The refrains "Hail, bride unwedded" and "Alleluia" I consider at the end of the analysis.

The hymn begins with the scene of the Annunciation in four strophes. The meeting of the angel Gabriel with Mary is told in the framework of the Gospel story related by Luke (1.26–38),[87] but the

[86] Briere (1985), 22. Cf. Nestorius's argument, "the body is the temple of the deity of the Son", in the second letter to Cyril (Tanner 1990: 48).

[87] The Annunciation is found also in the *Protevangelium Jacobi* (XI), but it differs from the Gospel in detail.

emphasis is different. It is striking that here the Gospel's *parthenos* engaged to Joseph is called the Theotokos and the holy one, and that it is the Theotokos to whom the angel presents the greetings (τὸ χαῖρε).[88] The Incarnation, 'the Lord becoming flesh', is already seen by the angel, who cries out his first salutations with amazement. Two strophes are dedicated to Mary's wonder at the paradoxical message, but the answer she gives to Gabriel according to Luke is omitted. The second set of salutations of the angel reflects Mary's question of how a son can be born of chaste loins, which, however, is to remain a mystery. The scene ends with a reference to the Gospel, and with a comparison of Mary's womb to a field from which salvation can be reaped.

The scene of the Annunciation presented with this emphasis is representative of the Ephesian period, for in the discussion on the manner of the Incarnation the paradox of the virgin birth and Mary's chaste womb yielding salvation, linked with the title 'Theotokos', was recurrent. In addition, here the respect which in the asceticism of that period was given to Mary shows itself in her stance, for it is her chastity which justifies her in addressing the angel without fear. Mary is also described as yearning for knowledge and demanding an answer. This means that some personality is ascribed to her. But a comparison with the character of the Virgin in Luke makes it clear that the hymn actually does not go beyond the description of the personality given in the Gospel.[89] What makes the difference is the hymn's emphasis on Mary's chastity, whose significance she seems to be aware of ("seeing herself to be chaste, spoke boldly", 2.1), whereas in the Gospel the emphasis lies on Mary's answer. It is noteworthy that Mary's personal features found throughout the hymn are presented in this context.

The Annunciation scene is completed by two sets of salutations, which reveal the ideological framework in which the hymnographer deals with the meeting of Gabriel and Mary, for the Akathistos does not reflect solely the Gospel story. The opening salutations take us to that

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[88] Luke 1.27: χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ. "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." In the Akathistos translations χαῖρε is often represented by the word 'rejoice', which is an interpretation, but defensible on the grounds of the basic meaning of the word χαίρω; consult Liddell and Scott (1968), cf. Brown (1993), 321–7.

[89] Luke 1.29: ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ διεταράχθη καὶ διελογίζετο ποταπὸς εἴη ὁ ἀσπασμὸς οὗτος. "But she was perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be." Luke 1.34: πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω; "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

moment whereupon the curse God pronounced in Paradise is cancelled; Adam is recalled and Eve is freed of her tears.[90] Now the height and depth, which is unattainable by human thoughts and invisible to the eyes of angels, is visible in Mary, for she carries in her womb him who bears all. At the same time, through her the creation is made new. This is the situation at the moment of the conception, in which the reason for God becoming incarnate is to be discerned. From it we see that the Incarnation is understood to be a restoration; it is a new beginning and corrects what went wrong at the Fall. It is evident that in the background lies the theory of recapitulation, which both implies the redemptive plan of God (*oikonomia*) and connects Mary and Eve. The antithesis of the height and depth ("height hard for human thoughts to scale" and "depth hard even for the eyes of angels to pierce") represents the divine plan which resulted in the Incarnation. Even if the hymn does not quote Mary's answer to Gabriel, it is self-evident that her obedience, her consent to the will of God as it is related in Luke, constitutes the prerequisite of the realization of the divine plan. Undoubtedly the role Mary is given here is that of the antitype of Eve.

The first four strophes form the basis for the whole hymn. They justify Mary's position in the divine plan of salvation, realized through the Incarnation of Christ, and the concept of the Second Eve is the argument for it.[91]

Strophe 1

Amongst the salutations of the first strophe there are four epithets referring to the place where the Incarnation occurs (1.12–15). The idea of the "womb of the divine Incarnation" (1.15) is expressed in the metaphorical paraphrase the "star causing the sun to shine" (1.14). The sun as Christ's attribute derives from the prophecy of Malachi, and is in full the

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[90] Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* V.19.1 (trans. Grant, 1997): "As the first was seduced into disobeying God, so the second was persuaded to obey God so that the virgin Mary might became the advocate of the virgin Eve; and just as the human race was subjected to death by a virgin, it was freed by a virgin, with the virginal disobedience balanced by virginal obedience." Cf. Proclus, Hom. 5, *PG* 65.720C; Constas (1994), 221/233; Gen. 3.16.

[91] Addison argues for the Mother of God as the basic concept, cf. Addison (1983), 8.

"sun of righteousness".[92] Obviously the word γαστήρ, which belongs to the basic vocabulary of the hymn, affected the choice of the word ἀστήρ. The result is an especially apt analogy because of the morning star, which is to be seen before sunrise. Naturally also the star of Bethlehem, a synonym for the parousia of Christ,[93] can be associated with the star which anticipates sunrise. A comparison of Mary with the star is found in Hesychius, but it does not display exactly the same characteristic as in the Akathistos.[94] Anyhow, since the 'sun' is an Old Testament typology, the 'star', even if it was a pun, emerged in typological thinking, and is to be interpreted in a biblical context.[95]

Another epithet referring to the place of the Incarnation is the metaphor "the chair of the king" (1.12). The word καθέδρα ('chair'), like θρόνος ('throne'), appears as a symbol of power in the Old Testament.[96] Luke for instance uses it in the angelic message, where it explicitly refers to the throne of the king David.[97] Hesychius relates that Mary was called καθέδρα, "the chair, not less than the cherubic chair".[98] The cherubic chair was the cover of the ark of the covenant, the so-called mercy-seat (ἱλαστήριον). The wings of two cherubim overshadowed it, and it was the place where God spoke to Moses.[99] In the epithet "chair of the king", the Old Testament meanings of the cherubic chair and of the throne of David might be blended. At the same time the "chair of the king" serves as an analogy of the womb of the divine Incarnation. These three epithets (the womb, star and chair), referring to the place of the divine Incarnation, represent clearly the concept Theotokos, whereas

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[92] Mal. 3.20 (*NRSV* 4.2): καὶ ἀνατελεῖ ὑμῖν τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά μου ἥλιος δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἴασις ἐν ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ. "But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings." E.g. Proclus, Hom. 4, *PG* 65.713B; Constas (1994), 193/203: "Today the Sun of righteousness has risen from the virginal cloud."

[93] Cf. Arndt and Gingrich (1957), s.v. ἀστήρ.

[94] Hom. 5, *PG* 93.1461A = Aubineau (1978), 5.1.5–6: Οὗτος αὐτὴν Μητέρα φωτὸς ἐπονομάζει· ἐκεῖνος Ἀστέρα ζωῆς. "This names her Mother of the light, and that the Star of life."

[95] Limberis (1987), 67–73, interprets the epithet "star" as an analogy of the astral light with which the goddess Isis or other deities were compared.

[96] Sir. 7.4: μὴ ζήτει παρὰ κυρίου ἡγεμονίαν μηδὲ παρὰ βασιλέως καθέδραν δόξης. "Do not seek from the Lord high office, or the seat of honour from the king."

[97] Luke 1.32: καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρός αὐτοῦ "and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David". Cf. Isa. 9.6.

[98] Hom. 5, *PG* 93.1461A = Aubineau (1978), 5.1.8: Καθέδραν τῆς τῶν χερουβικῶν καθέδρας οὐκ ἐλάττονα.

[99] Exod. 25.17–22.

the fourth epithet "you bear him who bears all" (1.13) could be associated with the work of Christ, rather than with the nature of Christ. However, precisely the corresponding idea in a homily of Proclus is encountered in a context which confirms that the epithet is concerned with the nature of Christ.[100] It is worth remembering that already Ephrem the Syrian, in his Incarnation hymn, juxtaposes the Creator's nature as the *pantokrator* and the smallness of the womb, in other words, exploits the same paradox.[101] But in Proclus the arrangement is evidently concerned with the Theotokos issue. Therefore it can be inferred that the epithet "you bear him who bears all" is meant to emphasize the contrast of the uncontainable nature of God and the womb. Thus, among the first salutations are four epithets relaying the position of the defenders of the Theotokos that the place of the divine Incarnation is the womb (1.12–15).

Strophe 2

In strophe 2 the emphasis lies on Mary's chastity. In Luke Mary's question reads simply: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?". Here her wonder at the seedless conception is described by using the word παράδοξον ('paradox'), a word which the Fathers of the Alexandrian tradition favoured in depicting the Incarnation. The phrase "the paradox of your words I find hard for my soul to accept" (Τὸ παράδοξόν σου τῆς φωνῆς δυσπαράδεκτόν μου τῇ ψυχῇ φαίνεται, 2.3–4) is generally considered as parallel to a passage on the Annunciation in Homily 39 of 'Basil of Seleucia': "The paradox of your annunciation holds an assur-

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[100] Proclus, Hom. 4, *PG* 65.709B; Constas (1994), 187/197: δεῦτε ἴδωμεν γαστέρα παρθένου πλατυτέραν τῆς κτίσεως· ὁ γὰρ ἐκεῖ μὴ χωρούμενος, ἐν ταύτῃ ἀστενοχώρητως ἐχώρησε. καὶ ὁ ἐν τῇ χεῖρι καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν τεκοῦσαν βαστάζων μετὰ πάντων, ὑπὸ ταύτης βαστάζεται. "Come and behold the womb of a virgin wider than creation, for the one whom [creation] could not contain is contained in her without constriction. And the one who bears the one who bore him, along with the entire universe, in the palm of his hand, is now himself borne in her womb."

[101] "The Power that governs all dwelt in a small womb. While dwelling there, He was holding the reins of the universe. . . . The heavens and all the creation were filled by Him. . . . The Sun entered the womb, and in the height and depth His rays were dwelling. . . . He dwelt in the vast wombs of all creation. They were too small to contain the greatness of the First-born. How indeed did that small womb of Mary suffice for Him?"

ance hard to accept" (Τὸ παράδοξον τῆς σῆς ἐπαγγελίας δυσπαράδεκτον ἔχει πληροφορίαν).[102]

Strophe 3

In strophe 3 the angel's salutations reflect Mary's question: "How can a son be born of chaste loins?" The very first epithet, "initiate of sacred counsel" (χαῖρε, βουλῆς ἀπορρήτου μύστις, 3.6),[103] reveals that a divine plan existed, into which Mary was initiated. In fact the angelic greeting, χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη ("Hail, favoured one!") implies also a plan, since a choice preceded the sending of Gabriel. However, the meaning of the word μύστις expresses Mary's status more clearly than κεχαριτωμένη. It could be interpreted so that, besides being chosen by God, she possesses knowledge which nobody else can obtain, because of her unique experience of the mystery. This suggestion is strengthened by the epithets below, "you who surpass the knowledge of the wise" (3.16) and "you who illuminate the minds of the faithful" (3.17). The idea of the epithet "surpassing the knowledge of the wise" mirrors the ascetical attitude that real knowledge (γνώσις) cannot be obtained through philosophy: real knowledge is spiritual and manifests itself in illuminating the mind.[104] Here Mary as initiate is considered as a proof of such knowledge.

On the other hand, through the epithets "Hail, you who ineffably gave birth to the light" (3.14) and "Hail, you who taught nobody 'how' " (3.15) the basis for Mary's knowledge is directly linked with the mystery of the virgin birth. The light as the epithet of Christ is to be traced back to the prophecy of Isaiah,[105] which passage is frequently quoted in patristic writings.[106] In the Akathistos it is alluded to it in strophe 21. The word ἀρρήτως ('ineffably') is found in Homily 4 of Proclus among

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[102] *PG* 85.444C.

[103] Lampe (1961): "βουλή, ἡ, *deliberation, counsel, design*"; Liddell and Scott (1968): "ἀπορρήτος, *not to be spoken, that should not be spoken*; hence *mystical, sacred*"; Lampe (1961): "μύστις ἡ, fem. form of μύστης, 1. *one initiated into the mysteries, initiate*; 2. *of one who has full knowledge, an expert; of those who expound inner meaning of scripture*; 3. *of one who is privy to secret, a confidant.*"

[104] Cf. analysis of str. 21 below.

[105] Isa. 9.1 (9.2): ὁ λαὸς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει, ἴδετε φῶς μέγα· οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρᾳ καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου, φῶς λάμψει ἐφ' ὑμᾶς. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined" (*NRSV* translation from Hebrew).

[106] E.g. Proclus, Hom. 4, *PG* 65. 713B; Constas (1994), 193/203.

several other adverbs expressing the manner of the birth of the Son from God the Father before the ages.[107] In the first decades of the fifth century the question of the manner of the Incarnation became so crucial that practically all homilists bring 'how' (τὸ "πῶς") into focus. Homily 4 of Hesychius exemplifies the topic well.[108] The idea of praying in silence ("faith of those who pray in silence", 3.7) alludes to the life of ascetics.[109]

The epithet "prelude to the miracles of Christ" (3.8) is the angel's reply to Mary's question of how the virgin birth-giving is possible, and hereby she is said to be the first of Christ's miracles. But the succeeding epithet, "the main chapter of his teachings" (3.9), cannot be justified by the reference to the miracle of the virgin birth. So, what is the argument which makes this epithet understandable in the context of the hymn? Could it refer, as Paul Addison interprets the passage, to the dogma of the virginal motherhood (the Theotokos), i.e. to the nature of Christ?[110] The word δόγμα, connoting doctrines or creeds, suggests this idea.[111] Perhaps the interpretation that it is an allusion to the dogmatical argument for Christ's nature should not be excluded, when we think that strophe 23 asserts that the Lord himself "taught us all to cry" to the Theotokos a salutation which undeniably defines her Christological position (23.6). The word δόγμα means also something which one thinks true. On this basis Addison translates: "Rejoice, in whom all His Truths are brought forth."[112] But neither does this solution disclose the sense of the original text, if the angelic greeting is taken literally, for we do not know the content of the κεφάλαιον ('the main chapter'). At this stage I leave this question open, because the interpretation which I will suggest is based on an argument, which becomes evident only toward the end of the analysis of the hymn.

The metaphor of the ladder, the "celestial ladder by which God descended" (3.10) is generally interpreted as an Old Testament typology, referring to the ladder which Jacob saw in a dream.[113] It is not

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107 Cf. *PG* 65.716A; Constas (1994), 194/206.

108 Hom. 4, *PG* 93.1453, see esp. 1456 = Aubineau (1978), 6.4.

109 Retreat from the world into silence to pray, cf. Frank (1964), 19–21.

110 Addison (1983), 38.

111 Koder translates "Hauptstück seiner Dogmen" (Koder 1996: 196). It is often interpreted as the 'teachings' e.g. "Summation of His teachings" (Carpenter 1970: 30); "Crown and fulfilment of His teachings" (*The Lenten Triodion* 1984: 424).

112 Addison (1983), 15.

113 Gen. 28.12: καὶ ἐνυπνιάσθη, καὶ ἰδοὺ κλίμαξ ἐστηριγμένη ἐν τῇ γῇ, ἧς ἡ κεφαλὴ ἀφικνεῖτο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν· καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον ἐπ' αὐτῇ.

found in the homilies of the Ephesian context. But the second metaphor, that of the bridge, is found in the famous homily of Proclus: "The only bridge of God to human beings."[114] However, it is impossible to say whether the epithet "bridge leading those from earth to heaven" (3.11) was modelled after it. In any case, the words 'ladder' and 'bridge' have the same function in that they unite what is separated. They are comparable with the other metaphors of the womb, and do not represent Mary's personality.[115] These two metaphorical epithets describe brilliantly the place of Mary in the economy of salvation.

The epithets "marvel greatly lauded by the angels" (3.12) and "wound greatly lamented by the demons" (3.13) tell of a time when angelology and demonology formed an essential element in Christian life.[116] In the Akathistos the angels are presented as ministering to God,[117] whereas the presence of the devil is to be perceived in the consequences of his action on human life.[118] The approach to the theme

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"And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!"

[114] *ACO* I.1.103.17–18: ἡ μόνη Θεῷ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους γέφυρα.

[115] The metaphor of bridge is used as an argument for the doctrine of Mary's mediation (cf. O'Carroll 1983, s.v. "Mediation, Mary Mediatress"), but it is too early to interpret this metaphor as *mesitis* in the Akathistos (cf. Lampe 1961, s.v. μεσῖτις, ἡ), for *mesitis* is not met before the eight century in Andrew of Crete.

[116] Belief in angels was a characteristic of later Judaism, and exercised strong influence on early Christian thought. Demonology was in the first place linked with practices of asceticism, which hagiography made familiar. See on the doctrines of angels and demons Pelikan (1971), 132–41, cf. Kelly (1989), 7; Frank (1964), 69–74; Bartelink (1977), 27–38. *The Celestial Hierarchy* (Περὶ τῆς οὐρανίας ἱεραρχίας) by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, written probably at the end of the fifth century, is the most exhaustive philosophical treatise on angels which is known from the early Byzantine era, and its influence was tremendous. No traces of its angelology can be found in the Akathistos Hymn.

[117] Pr., str. 1–3 (τὸν λειτουργοῦντα, 3.2), 3.12., 7.1, 15.10–11, str. 16. In a more developed angelology the angels were depicted as impinging on the private, personal realm of Christians. For instance the homilies of Proclus and Hesychius do not yet represent such development, cf. Allen (1996), 170–1. Cf. Proclus, Hom. 19, "In S. Pascha", *PG* 65.796B; "De Ascensione Domini", *PG* 65.836C.

[118] Irenaeus's description of the nature and role of the devil represents the standard notion of the matter, *Adversus Haereses* V.24.3: Ὁ δὲ διάβολος, ἅτε ἀποστάτης ὑπάρχων ἄγγελος, τοῦτο μόνον δύναται, ὅ καὶ ἔπραξε τὴν ἀρχήν, παραπείθεν τε καὶ ἀπάγειν τὴν γνώμην τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὸ παραβῆναι τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἠρέμα ἐκτυφλοῦν τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἐπακουόντων αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἐπιλαθέσθαι μὲν τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ, αὐτὸν δὲ ὡς Θεὸν προσκυνῆσαι. "As for the devil, who is merely an apostate angel, he can only do what he did in the beginning, that is, seduce and lead astray the mind of man to transgress the commandments of God and gradually blind the hearts of those who hear him and forget the true God, worshipping this one as God." In the Akathistos angels are presented as ministering to God.

corroborates the impression of the ascetical framework of the hymn, for even though the demons are mentioned explicitly only twice (cf. 11.7), a pervasive idea of the hymn is the battle against the evil spirit. Spiritual struggle is particularly involved with the theme of chastity as we can see in strophe 19. In the light of Gregory of Nyssa's famous comparison, included in his treatise *De Virginitate*, "the wound greatly lamented by the demons" is to be interpreted as the defeat which the demonic powers suffered through Mary's chastity.[119] In strophe 13 of the Akathistos is found the idea that Christ, the new creation through Mary's virgin birth-giving, redeems the captives. The redemption of the captives signifies Christ's victory over the devil,[120] the prerequisite for which was Mary's chastity.

Strophe 4

The last strophe of the Annunciation scene describes the conception by stating that the power of the Most High overshadowed the one without experience of marriage (ἀπειρογάμῳ, 4.2). This is based on the Gospel story.[121] Then the significance of the act is told poetically by comparing Mary's womb with a field. Salvation is compared to harvest: "she showed forth her fruitful womb as a sweet field for all who are willing to harvest salvation" (4.3–5). The figure of field for the womb has its origin in ancient cultures, like all figurative language concerning earth's fecundity and childbirth.[122] But in the earliest speculations on Mary it was used in a specific sense, which I will discuss in the analysis of strophe 5. Harvest, of course, is associated with the field, but the "harvest of salvation" could originate in a parable of Jesus, in which the "fruit for eternal life" appears.[123] It is quite possible, however, as Addison suggests, that this strophe and the next one should be seen in the light of the 'fruit-bearing' prophecies of Isaiah,[124] because of the typological ap-

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[119] *De Virginitate* XIV.1.22–30.
[120] Cf. Proclus, Hom. 1, *PG* 65.685BCD; *ACO* I.1.1.105.1–15.
[121] Luke 1.35: πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."
[122] Cf. S. Benko (1993), 206–12.
[123] John 4.36.
[124] Addison (1983), 39; particularly Isa. 55.10–11.

proach which characterizes the hymn. The Annunciation theme concludes with an idea which could point to the Theotokos controversy, for the idea "her fruitful womb as a sweet field for all those who are willing to harvest salvation" implies that if you do not believe that salvation comes from Mary's womb, you cannot be saved. It is impossible to say with certainty whether it is addressed to the heretics who did not confess Mary as the Theotokos, but it is certain that in the Ephesian context the point at issue was concrete and disputed.

Compared with the Gospel story of the Annunciation, the Akathistos shows an interesting conceptual development in the image of Mary. Besides what is directly told in the first four strophes, the author's approach, manifest in the use and emphasis of the word 'Theotokos' and in some epithets, can be inferred to correspond to that of the defenders of the term 'Theotokos'. The concept Theotokos is clearly discernible in the narration. The relevance of the concept Second Eve to the message of the hymn is evident. For example, the reason for the Incarnation is told in references to the Fall and to the new creation, a treatment which reveals that the explanation of history as a process of salvation provides the framework of the hymn. Only the postulation of the concept Second Eve makes Mary's position understandable in this context. Other distinctive elements can be traced back to the framework of asceticism.

Strophe 5

Strophe 5 continues the narration within the framework of Luke's Gospel, and concerns Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Luke relates that Elizabeth's child leapt in her womb when she heard Mary's greeting, and that, filled with the Holy Spirit, she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."[125] The Akathistos does not quote Elizabeth's words, but the imagery of the first epithets is centred around the 'blessed fruit' of the womb. The poet resorts to the ingenious artistic solution of putting the greetings into the mouth of Elizabeth's unborn child. The prophetic insight of the developing John the Baptist is thus emphasized. The word θεοδόχος ('bearing God', 5.1) was a cause of

[125] Luke 1.42: εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξὶν καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου.

great dispute in the Theotokos controversy.[126] When the first verse focuses attention on θεοδόχος, stressing that God was born from a womb, the inference that the word θεοδόχος refers to the controversy does not therefore look exaggerated.

In the first pair of salutations, "Hail, vine-twig of unfading bud" (5.6) and, "Hail, treasure of undying fruit" (5.7) the 'place' which always indicates the concept Theotokos is found.[127] But besides the paradox the 'container of the uncontainable' there is also the juxtaposition of immortality and perishability. The immortal divine nature of Christ is expressed explicitly ("unfading bud", "undying fruit"). Mary is called the vine-twig (which in the cycle of nature is doomed to die). These epithets imply firstly the relevance of the theme of immortality here, and secondly, that Christ receives his human nature from Mary. Let us investigate first the question of Christ's human nature.

It is to be noted that the metaphors of the field (ἀγρός, 4.4), the vine (κλῆμα, 5.6) and the earth (ἄρουρα, 5.10)[128] have the same reference: to the place where the 'tiller' and the 'cultivator' is generated ("Hail, you who till the tiller who loves humankind", 5.8; "Hail, you who cultivate the cultivator of our life", 5.9). I mentioned above that figurative language concerning earth's fecundity and childbirth was used in the earliest speculations on Mary in a specific sense; thus Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, employs the imagery with a meaning restricted to the Incarnation. There he asks: "Why would Christ have come down into her if he was to receive nothing from her?"[129] The relevant passage is included in the sections where Irenaeus argues for the Incarnation as

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[126] Cf. Lampe (1961): "θεοδόχος, *receiving God*." A fine example of the topic is found in a dubious homily of Athanasius (dated to 429), *PG* 28.964–8, which Caro (1971–3), 27, considers most important in the context of Ephesus. Another example of orthodox interpretation is from Theodotus of Ancyra, who formulated an equivalence: "As regards the womb, she is Θεοδόχος, as regards action (τῷ ἔργῳ), she is Θεοτόκος", cf. de Nicola (1989), 162. When Marx (1940), 86–7, analyses Homily 39 of 'Basil of Seleucia' he pays special attention to this word and considers it as an argument for the date.

[127] The word κτῆμα means 'anything acquired, a piece of property, a possession', cf. Liddell and Scott (1968). Besides the 'field' and 'land' it could be, for instance, the 'orchard'.

[128] Liddell and Scott (1968): "ἄρουρα ἡ, *tilled or arable land, seed-land, corn-land*, 2. generally, *earth, ground*, 5. metaph. of a woman as receiving seed and bearing fruit", e.g. Proclus, Hom. 5, *PG* 65.720B, Constas (1994), 220/232: Εὐφημεῖται Σάρρα, ὡς λαῶν ἄρουρα. "Sarah is praised as the fertile seedbed of nations." *ACO* I.1.104.14–15: ὦ ἄρουρα, ἐν ᾗ ὁ τῆς φύσεως γεωργὸς Χριστὸς ὡς στάχυς ἀσπόρως ἐβλάστησεν. "O field, in which Christ, our nature's farmer, himself sprouted unsown as an ear of corn!"

[129] III.22.2: Τί γὰρ καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν κατῄει, εἰ μηδὲν ἔμελλε λήψεσθαι παρ' αὐτῆς;

recapitulation and for Mary's part in it.[130] In his theory the manner of the creation of the first man plays a significant role. The first-fashioned Adam received his substance from earth, which was uncultivated, still 'virgin', as Genesis was interpreted.[131] Now, Irenaeus's point is to show that the origin of the Second Adam repeated the first fashioning of man.[132] This correspondence lends Mary's virginity the special meaning of the earth; it is like the paradisal earth from which the first man was fashioned. It is noteworthy that the concept of the virgin of Irenaeus, the 'virgin earth', does not refer to the prophecy of Isaiah 7.14 (the virgin birth as a testimony of the divinity of Christ), but constitutes a testimony to the humanity of Christ.[133]

As regards the theme of immortality, Irenaeus treats it before he begins to explain recapitulation. Eternal life for human beings through the Incarnation of the immortal Word is the essential purport of the passage. According to Irenaeus, for human beings it is possible to receive imperishability and immortality only when "imperishability and immor-

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130 III.21.10, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 23.3, 23.5.

131 Gen. 2.5–7: καὶ πᾶν χλωρὸν ἀγροῦ πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντα χόρτον ἀγροῦ πρὸ τοῦ ἀνατεῖλαι· οὐ γὰρ ἔβρεξεν ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἦν ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν ... καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς. "When no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground . . . then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground."

132 III.21.10: Καὶ ὡς ὁ πρωτόπλαστος ἐκεῖνος Ἀδὰμ ἐξ ἀνεργάστου γῆς καὶ ἔτι παρθένου—"οὔπω γὰρ ἔβρεξεν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἦν εἰργασμένος τὴν γῆν"—ἔσχε σύστασιν καὶ ἐπλάσθη χειρὶ Θεοῦ, τουτέστι Λόγῳ Θεοῦ—"πάντα" γὰρ "δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο" καὶ "λαβὼν κύριος χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἔπλασε τὸν ἄνθρωπον"—οὕτως, ἀνακεφαλαιούμενος εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὸν Ἀδάμ, αὐτὸς Λόγος ὑπάρχων ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς ἔτι παρθένου ὀρθῶς ἐλάμβανε τὴν γέννησιν τῆς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ἀνακεφαλαιώσεως. "And as the first-fashioned Adam received his substance from the earth uncultivated and still virgin ('for God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground', Gen. 2.5) and was fashioned by the hand of God (Ps. 119.73), that is, by the Word of God, for 'all things came into being through him' (John 1.3) and 'then the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground' (Gen. 2.7), thus the Word, recapitulating Adam in himself, from Mary still virgin rightly received the generation that is the recapitulation of Adam." A similar explanation of the 'virgin earth' is found in Irenaeus's *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (32), *SC* 406.

133 III.22.2: Ἔτι τε εἰ μηδὲν εἰλήφει παρὰ τῆς Μαρίας, οὐκ ἂν τὰς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς εἰλημμένας προσίετο τροφάς, δι' ὧν τὸ ἀπὸ γῆς ληφθὲν τρέφεται σῶμα. ... Ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα σύμβολα σαρκὸς τῆς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς εἰλημμένης, ἣν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀνεκεφαλαιώσατο, τὸ ἴδιον πλάσμα σῴζων. "And if he had received nothing from Mary he would never have taken foods derived from the earth. . . . All these (i.e. hunger, pains, tears, blood) are signs of the flesh taken from the earth, which he recapitulated in himself, saving what he had formed."

tality had first been made what we are".[134] This idea is found in the epithets "vine-twig of unfading bud", "treasure of incorrupt fruit", "tilling the tiller" and "cultivating the cultivator"; the immortal nature of Christ "is made what we are". In the epithet "who till the tiller who loves humankind" (5.8) the word φιλάνθρωπος ('who loves humankind') indicates the reason for the Incarnation,[135] i.e. the love of God towards human beings. When we inspect these Marian epithets of the Akathistos it becomes clear that the ideas Irenaeus presented are identifiable in them. Even the characteristic of Irenaeus's theory, the re-creation, is there, associated with the events in Paradise: "Hail, since you make the meadow of delights blossom again" (5.12).[136] The influence of the 'virgin earth' of Irenaeus on patristic views can be attested still in fifth-century homilies, which more or less directly reflect his original argumentation.[137]

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[134] III.19.1: Πῶς δὲ ἑνωθῆναι ἠδυνάμεθα τῇ ἀφθαρσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀθανασίᾳ, εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἡ ἀφθαρσία καὶ ἡ ἀθανασία ἐγένετο τουθ' ὅπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς, "ἵνα καταποθῇ" τὸ φθαρτὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας καὶ "τὸ θνητὸν" ὑπὸ τῆς ἀθανασίας, "ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν". "How could we be united with imperishability and immortality, unless imperishability and immortality had first been made what we are, in order that the perishable should be absorbed in the imperishable and the moral in the immortal, so that we might retrieve our adoption as sons."

[135] Cf. Hunger (1963).

[136] The word ἀναθάλλεις 'make blossom' refers to recreation, and the λειμῶνα τῆς τρυφῆς "meadow of delights" no doubt refers to Paradise, which in the Septuagint has the attribute τῆς τρυφῆς (Gen. 3.23–4: παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς, "Paradise of delights", cf. Lampe (1961): "τρυφή, ἡ, b. *of Eden and man's state before Fall*"). Cf. Proclus, Hom. 4, *PG* 65.709A; Constas (1994), 186–7/196: ὥ παρθένος ἀνοίξασα τῷ Ἀδὰμ τὸν παράδεισον, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ παραδείσου ἐνδοξοτέρα ὑπάρχουσα. ὁ μὲν γὰρ Θεοῦ γεώργιον γέγονεν, ἡ δὲ κατὰ σάρκα Θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐγεώργησεν. "Virgin, more glorious than Paradise, who opened up Paradise for Adam! For Paradise was merely the tillage of God, but the [virgin] tilled God himself in the flesh."

[137] E.g. Homily 39 of 'Basil of Seleucia', in which Christ's human nature is analysed from the premises of Irenaeus, *PG* 85.437AB: Ἔλαβε πάλαι χοῦν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πέπλακεν ἄνθρωπον· ἔλαβε πάλιν τὸν ἐκ Παρθένου χοῦν, τὴν σάρκα λέγω ἐξ αὐτῆς, καὶ ὡς οἶδεν ἑαυτῷ πέπλακε, καὶ ἄνθρωπος γέγονε, "God took earth of old and fashioned man; again he took earth of the Virgin, I mean flesh from her, and in his wisdom planned, and became man", etc. It seems most probable that the references of the homilies to the virgin earth are traceable to a great degree to such speculations as we find first in Irenaeus's writings, but this hypothesis needs further investigation to be proved. Today the origins of the virgin earth and corresponding images are explained by the models which the ancient earth-goddess myths provided. For instance Constas maintains that the 'Virgin Earth' and numerous images of the Virgin as 'place' or 'locus' used by Proclus originate in "Proclus' aestheticization of the reproductive process with a vision of the earth as parthenogenetic" (cf. Constas 1995, 178). It is true that classical Greek religion and myths would offer enough parallels for the Marian images (cf. ibid. n. 33). But I think

In addition to this, there are salutations which are connected with the Old Testament through the story of John the Baptist's birth as told by Luke. John's father was the priest Zechariah. The angel Gabriel appeared to him in the sanctuary of the Lord and brought the news about the birth of John, when he was offering incense.[138] The incense-offering had been ordained by the Lord during the Exodus to be performed by Aaron "throughout his generations".[139] In the Old Testament, following the passage in which the regulations of the daily incense-offering are given, the ordinance concerning the rite of atonement is recorded.[140] The place where the incense-offering and the rite of atonement were performed was inside the tabernacle, in front of the curtain that separated off the ark of the covenant with the mercy-seat.[141] Now, the Akathistos Hymn's epithets, "acceptable incense of intercession" (5.14) and "atonement for the whole world" (5.15), may be interpreted as consistent typological references to the Old Testament. In the context of the hymn this is a logical link, because it is the son of a priest who expresses such ideas. Nevertheless, it is plain that Mary can be called the "atonement for the whole world" only when she carries Christ in her womb.[142]

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that for Proclus and his contemporaries we should ignore neither the influence of the 'virgin earth' of Irenaeus nor the interpretative tradition linked with this concept, given that the homilists themselves treat the matter in the framework of recapitulation. For, despite the obvious analogy between Mary's virginity and the parthenogenetic earth, this analogy did not give rise to the Marian epithets representing the earth or a place to be created, because these epithets were always involved with Christ's nature. So, those Christological concepts—even though metaphorical—did not originate in the "aestheticization of the reproductive process with a vision of the earth as parthenogenetic".

[138] Luke 1.8–10.

[139] Exod. 30.7–9: καὶ θυμιάσει ἐπ' αὐτοῦ Ααρων θυμίαμα σύνθετον λεπτόν . . . θυμίαμα ἐνδελεχισμοῦ διὰ παντὸς ἔναντι κυρίου εἰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν. "Aaron shall offer fragrant incense on it . . . a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations."

[140] Exod. 30.10: καὶ ἐξιλάσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸ Ααρων ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ· ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τοῦ ἐξιλασμοῦ ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ καθαριεῖ αὐτὸ εἰς τὰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν. "Once a year Aaron shall perform the rite of atonement on its horns. Throughout your generations he shall perform the atonement for it once a year with the blood of the atoning sin-offering."

[141] Exod. 30.6: καὶ θήσεις αὐτὸ ἀπέναντι τοῦ καταπετάσματος τοῦ ὄντος ἐπὶ τῆς κιβωτοῦ τῶν μαρτηρίων, ἐν οἷς γνωσθήσομαί σοι ἐκεῖθεν. "You shall place it in front of the curtain that is above the ark of the covenant, in front of the mercy-seat that is over the covenant, where I will meet you."

[142] Here Hebrews 9 has to be taken into account, for it is unthinkable that the author of the Akathistos was not familiar with it. The exegesis of Hebrews 9 is based on typology. There Christ is described as the antitype of an Old Testament high priest, who per-

The epithet "table that bears a wealth of mercy" (5.11) originates also in the Old Testament. The instructions concerning the τράπεζα were given by the Lord together with the pattern of the tabernacle and its furniture, the golden ark with mercy-seat and the golden lampstand. On the table there were the plates and dishes for incense, and the flagons and bowls with which to pour drink-offerings, and the "bread of the Presence".[143] Undoubtedly the word τράπεζα can be associated with many things,[144] but in the context of the hymn, like the "incense" and the "atonement", it establishes the correspondence between the old and the new covenant. Let it be noted also that the epithets in strophe 23, "tabernacle of God and the Word" (23.6) and "greater than the Holy of Holies" (23.7) and "ark gilded by the Spirit" (23.8), appear in the same context in Exodus as the "incense", the "atonement" and the "table". There it is recorded how God made a covenant with Moses and Israel on Sinai and ordained them to construct the tabernacle.[145]

The epithet "good will of God towards mortals" (5.16) seems to belong conceptually together with the epithets concerning the holy rites of the old covenant.[146] Taking this context into consideration, its meaning could be put in the following way: Mary is a concrete testimony that prayers and offerings were heard by God or pleased God. And as the offerings were performed for all, God's favour affects all. The epithet "freedom of approach for mortals before God" (5.17) for its part does not refer to any specific context of the Old Testament, even if its sense is unfolded in the light of the Old Testament. The use of the word παρρησία as a Marian attribute needs further investigation, but the use of it in the context of the hymn is still explainable. The basic meaning of παρρησία is 'freedom of speech', which was thought to be possible before God on a certain condition, e.g. 1 John 3.21: "If our hearts do

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formed the rite with his own blood, once and for all (Heb. 9.11-28), cf. Goppelt (1939), 193–205.

[143] Exod. 25.23–30. Καὶ ποιήσεις τράπεζαν χρυσίου καθαροῦ ... καὶ ποιήσεις τὰ τρυβλία αὐτῆς καὶ τὰς θυίσκας καὶ τὰ σπονδεῖα καὶ τοὺς κυάθους, ἐν οἷς σπείσεις ἐν αὐτοῖς. ... Καὶ ἐπιθήσεις ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν ἄρτους ἐνωπίους ἐναντίον μοῦ διὰ παντός. "And you shall make the table of pure gold (*NRSV* acacia wood). ... And you shall make its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour libations. ... And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always."

[144] E.g. the eucharist and Christ's sufferings, cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. τράπεζα.

[145] Cf. Exod. 24–6.

[146] The word εὐδοκεῖν used in this sense, e.g. Ps. 50.21 (51.19): τότε εὐδοκήσεις θυσίαν δικαιοσύνης, ἀναφορὰν καὶ ὁλοκαυστόματα. "Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings."

not condemn us, we have boldness (παρρησίαν) before God."[147] Christian writers used it to describe the quality of relationship between humans and God, for example Moses possessed παρρησία before God, as did later martyrs and saints.[148] One could suppose that, in the first place, Mary's obedience to the will of God was held as the reason which justifies her free approach to God, and not her birth-giving.[149] Here we can point to the influence of the Old Testament, whose accounts of the relationship between God and human beings are characteristically related to the question of the obedience to the will of the Lord. The concept of παρρησία, being justified by obedience, could have been attributed to Mary through Irenaeus's theory, if not earlier. With the concept of παρρησία the whole epithet could be explained, likewise why Mary is told to intercede "for mortals".[150] At the level of the narration the epithets "good will of God towards mortals" and "freedom of approach for mortals before God" complement each other; the former is seen from the perspective of God and the latter from that of humans.

The salutations of strophe 5 link Mary with the old interpretative traditions of the Incarnation. The epithets depicting the 'place' of the immortal God and the regenerating of the Creator actually present no new aspects compared with the concept of the virgin earth of Irenaeus. It should be noted that, despite the metaphors of the place in four epi-

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[147] ἐὰν ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν μὴ καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.

[148] Cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. παρρησία. E.g. martyrs' intercession was believed to be efficacious, since they, having παρρησία before their persecutors, had attained to παρρησία before God. Cf. Bartelink (1997), 261.

[149] Contra Lampe (1961) (παρρησία "on divine maternity of BVM") referring to Pseudo-Epiphanius, Hom. 5, *PG* 43.501B. The passage of Pseudo-Epiphanius does not support this interpretation, because the phrase διὰ σοῦ παρρησίαν ἄνθρωποι ἐν οὐρανῷ πρὸς τὸν Ὕψιστον ἔχουσι ("because of you people in heaven have boldness before the Most High") is preceded by a longer comparison between Eve and Mary, and the word 'Theotokos' does not appear at all in that context.

[150] The idea of intercession was closely linked with the παρρησία. It emerged in the veneration of saints, who were believed to have access to God (cf. Kelly 1989: 490–1). It is clear that Mary's motherhood warrants the thought of her role as intercessor, as no one can be closer to God. On the other hand, Irenaeus's theory, according to which Mary "became the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race" (*Adversus Haereses* III.2.4), could as well provide an explanation for Mary's intercessory role. In this connection, it is worth noting that early ascetical literature testifies that living people too, who were considered as holy, were seen to possess παρρησία before God because of their continuous communion with God. Their intercessions for the people who needed help took place within their struggle for angelic life, cf. the analysis of the concept παρρησία in early ascetical practice: Frank (1964), 67–8. It is plain that Mary's role as intercessor could have been justified in different ways.

thets, the epithets themselves are not confined to describing the paradox of the container of the uncontainable, for the wider context reveals that they are concerned with the human nature of Christ, and through it are focused on the salvation of human beings. When the background of the child (the future John the Baptist) is observed (or the story which the author assumes the audience is familiar with), some epithets disclose a typical thought model of the early Christian centuries, common to Proclus and his contemporaries, that the Old Testament types were testimonies of the Christian truth. The inner coherence of the epithets "table", the "incense", the "atonement" and the "good will of God" emerges only when their Old Testament context is taken into consideration. Through them the significance of Mary in the economy of salvation is interpreted. But it is not only her theological significance that is described, for the concept παρρησία points also to the stage of the development of Mary's role in the cult. It can be summed up with the statement that, including the salutation "Hail, since you make ready a haven for the souls" (5.13),[151] all epithets of the salutations characterize Mary from the perspective of salvation history, which in the end is to be reduced to the concept Second Eve.

Strophe 6

The theme of strophe 6 is found in the Gospel of Matthew and in the *Protevangelium Jacobi.*[152] These relate that Joseph planned to dismiss Mary quietly, but an angel of the Lord told him not to do that, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. In the Akathistos the theological emphasis of that story is on the conception from the Holy Spirit, but the description of Joseph's psychic stress focuses the issue on Mary's chastity. The prudent (σώφρων) Joseph is troubled because he

[151] The word λιμένα, obviously chosen because of its phonological correspondence with the word λειμῶνα (in the preceding verse), does not conceptually suit the vocabulary of the salutations of strophe 5. On the other hand, it comes from the rhetoric of seafaring, which was so widely used by Christian orators that it is not surprising to find such a topos attached to Mary in the Akathistos (also 17.16–17). E.g. Proclus in his famous homily, *ACO* I.1.1.103.7–681A: ἰδοὺ γὰρ γῆ καὶ θάλαττα δορυφορεῖ τῇ παρθένῳ, ἡ μὲν τὰ νῶτα ταῖς ὁλκάσιν γαληνῶς ὑφαπλώσασα. "Behold, the earth and sea attend the Virgin, who has spread out the expanses tranquilly for the ships."

[152] Matt. 1.18–24; *Protevangelium Jacobi* XIII–XIV.

suspects that Mary was deceived (κλεψίγαμον ὑπονοῶν, 6.4).[153] The point is that to Joseph there could be no other explanation than a deceit, since he considered Mary as living in celibacy (ἄγαμος, 6.3).[154] This approach to the Gospel story and the selection of the words (σώφρων, ἄγαμος, κλεψίγαμον) could well reflect the reality of ascetic communities and the whole topic of protection and preservation of virginity since the rise of the phenomenon of female asceticism.[155] Considering the theological structure of the hymn, strophe 6 as a testimony to the birth of Christ relates to the episode of Joseph with the affirmation of Matthew: "All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' "[156] No doubt, the fundamental concept of the Virgin is to be detected in this strophe, although the word ἄγαμος calls for a narrower interpretation.

Strophe 7

Strophe 7 originates in the Gospel of Luke.[157] Luke relates how an angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Messiah to the shepherds, who went to see the "thing which the Lord had made known to them". The Akathistos Hymn's scene of the shepherds begins with the angels praising Christ's coming in the flesh (7.2) otherwise it differs essentially from the Gospel. Neither the child in the manger nor the mother with child are found by the shepherds of the Akathistos. They expect to see "their shepherd" (7.3), but what they actually see is both the shepherd and a spotless lamb (7.4). Mary again is alluded to as a mother-sheep ("pas-

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[153] σώφρων implying that nothing was found in Mary that could justify an accusation of adultery (Liddell and Scott 1968: "σώφρων, *having control over the sensual desires, temperate, self-controlled, moderate, chaste, sober*", cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. σωφρονέω and σωφροσύνη). Lampe (1961): "κλεψίγαμος, *seeking illicit love, adulterous.*"

[154] The word ἄγαμος is related to ἀγαμία, 'celibacy', cf. Lampe (1961). To render the word ἄγαμος as 'virgin' (παρθένος) would not reflect the idea expressed here.

[155] Cf. e.g. Elm (1996).

[156] Matt. 1.22–3: τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν (in reference to Isa. 7.14).

[157] Cf. Luke 2.8–20.

tured in Mary's womb", 7.5).[158] In Homily 4 of Proclus we find exactly the same setting: the shepherds—their shepherd as the spotless lamb—the virginal lamb.[159] The shepherd naturally refers to the parable Jesus told of himself, and the lamb can be understood in the light of the words of John the Baptist, quoted in the Gospel of John.[160] The Messianic meaning of these intertwined New Testament images manifests itself clearly in the typologies, which are deeply rooted in the history of the people of Israel and the Old Testament prophecies and their interpretation.[161] In terms of the Akathistos, the combination of the shepherd and the lamb is extremely interesting, because within this framework a new concept emerges in the image of Mary. The salutations reveal that it is concerned with the Church.

The first epithet introduces Mary as the mother of the lamb and the shepherd. The second calls her the fold of spiritual sheep (7.7), which is an unambiguous paraphrase of the Church.[162] The history of the epithet "protection against unseen wild beasts" (7.8) deserves its own investi-

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[158] Mary as a fair sheep was a concept which is known to have been used already in the second century, but its typological origin has not been clarified, cf. *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Mary".

[159] "On the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ", Hom. 4, *PG* 65.712AB; Constas (1994), 189/199: ποιμένες τρεχέτωσαν, διὰ τὸν ἐκ τῆς παρθενικῆς ἀμνάδος πορελθόντα ποιμένα. ὁ γὰρ ποιμὴν τὴν ξενοπαγῆ τοῦ σώματος δορὰν περιέθετο, καὶ ὁ λύκος ὡς ἀμνὸν ἰδὼν κεχηνὼς περιέτρεχεν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν ὀδόντας ἠκόνησε, τῶν δὲ σαρκῶν τοῦ ἀμώμου ἀμνοῦ οὐκ ἴσχυσε γεύσασθαι, ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ οὐκ εἶδε διαφθοράν. "Let shepherds come running, on account of the shepherd who came forth from the virginal lamb. For this shepherd cloaked himself in the strangely dense sheep-skin of the body, and the wolf, seeing him like a lamb, pursued him with jaws agape. But though his teeth were razor sharp, he was not able to taste the flesh of the spotless lamb, for 'his flesh did not see corruption'."

[160] The good shepherd parable, John 10.1–21; 10.11: ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός. ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." The 'lamb', John 1.29: ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Cf. Isa. 53.7. The whole shepherd image derives from the Old Testament (Ezek. 34).

[161] Cf. Goppelt (1939), 104–5, 127–31 (on the typology of the shepherd), 227–30 (on the typology of the lamb).

[162] Lampe (1961): "αὐλή, *courtyard, atrium of a church; steading, fold*; hence metaph. of Church." The spiritual sheep (λογικῶν προβάτων) appear for example in Clement of Alexandria's hymn to Christ, *Paedagogus* III.29–32: Προβάτων λογικῶν / ποιμὴν ἅγιε / ἡγοῦ, βασιλεῦ / παίδων ἀνεπάφων. See in note 35 the editor's explication of the word λογικός. Eusebius uses it in the sense of 'Church' or 'Christ's disciples' as a spiritual flock (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.13.3; *PG* 20.773C); cf. Addison (1983), 41.

gation, since the word ἀμυντήριον may signify an amulet.[163] Once Mary is presented as the Church, the "unseen wild beasts" could point to the enemies of the Orthodox faith, against whom the Church fought.[164] The apparent ascetical emphasis of the hymn again suggests that they refer to demons, fallen angels, evil spirits and all kinds of monsters, which from the beginning of the ascetical movement formed an inevitable part of the life of ascetics.[165] In both cases the 'unseen enemies' can be linked with the demons or temptations of which the New Testament warns.

The epithet "key to the gates of Paradise" (7.9) reflects in the first place the concept Second Eve, whereas the last eight epithets represent the Church. The 'Church' is a community which is both in heaven and on earth ("since heavenly things rejoice with the earth; since earthly things chant with the faithful", 7.10–11. There are the apostles and martyrs (ἀθλοφόρων),[166] firm faith and grace, there the believers' hope in *ta eschata* is fulfilled—it is quite clear that this is a description of the Church. But why is Mary called the "unsilenced mouth of the apostles" (7.12) and the "unvanquished courage of the martyrs" (7.13)? Addison gives an answer to this question on the basis of the succeeding epithets ("firm foundation of the faith", 7.14; "brilliant token of grace", 7.15): "Because they keep intact the gift of the Faith of which Mary is a foundation and proof, and they bear witness with their blood to Christ born of Mary."[167] One can agree that this interpretation empties the spiritual idea which those four epithets together represent. But I think that these and all the other epithets of this strophe referring to the Church should be taken as the different aspects of the "one, holy, catholic, apostolic" Church itself, and not as the reflections of a conceptual system "Mary as the Church". For we do not know that such an ecclesiological synthesis of the notions of Mary existed as these epithets imply.[168]

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[163] The use of amulets against demons is attested in fifth-century texts, Bartelink (1977), 38. Cf. Frisk (1960): ἀμύνω > ἀμυντήριον ('ward off' > 'amulet').

[164] Pelikan (1971), 70: "As a departure from the sound doctrine, heresy was a 'doctrine of demons'."

[165] Cf. Frank (1964), 69–74; Pelikan (1971), 95, 135–7, 148–51.

[166] Lampe (1961): "ἀθλοφόρος, *bearing the price, victorious*; of martyrs."

[167] Addison (1983), 41. Addison translates 7.14–15 with "powerful foundation for Faith" and "wonderful ensign of Grace".

[168] Cf. Benko (1993), 229–45; O'Carroll (1983), s.v. "Mother of the Church", 252, according to which Augustine "is the nearest any Father comes to a doctrine of Mary as Mother of the Church"; Kelly (1989), 497: "(Augustine) stressed (e.g. serm. 192.2) the special relationship between Mary and the Church, the one a virgin who brought forth Christ and the other a virgin who brings Christ's members to birth."

The last salutations, "Hail, through whom Hades was stripped bare" (7.16) and "Hail, through whom we were clothed in glory" (7.17) depicting the consequences of the Incarnation, are eschatological. The word ᾅδης had several meanings in early Christian conceptions, for instance it was used to refer to the place of the dead or as a personification of death.[169] While the first epithet suggests that Hades or death is now defeated, and that the defeat is like being made naked, the second epithet implies that 'our clothing' became possible on account of the victory over Hades. Addison interprets the 'clothing in glory' in the light of Romans 5.2 and 6, but there neither the word 'Hades' nor explicit clothing metaphors appear (like ἐγυμνώθη and ἐνεδύθημεν). I would rather interpret these epithets following the typological way of thinking.

Thus I understand that the idea expressed in the epithet "through whom Hades was stripped bare" is that when Christ descends into Hades he defeats death through his resurrection. This victory renders death naked as the naked state came to mean death to Adam and Eve in the Fall. The idea 'we were clothed in glory' refers to baptism (a sacrament of the Church). By means of baptism human beings are restored to their former glory.[170] In this connection special attention has to be paid to Syriac tradition, which presents the entire span of salvation history with clothing imagery. Sebastian Brock has put together a scenario of the employment of this imagery: the aim of the Incarnation was to have humankind reclothed in the robe of glory, which Adam and Eve lost in the Fall.[171] Relevant from the point of view of the epithet of the Akathistos is the idea that at the same time as Christ descends into the waters, he was understood to deposit the robe of glory or light in the water, "thus making it available once again for mankind to put it on in bap-

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[169] Cf. Lampe (1961). Rev. 1.18: ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾅδου. "I have the keys of Death and of Hades." Proclus's description of what takes place in Hades as a result of the Incarnation is a good example of the treatment of the Hades theme, and demonstrates that he does not associate Hades with the ancient Greek concept of the god of the lower world, but with Hades in Job 38.17, Hom. 5, *PG* 65.720A; Constas (1994), 219/231: ὁ ᾅδης τοὺς νεκροὺς ἐν φόβῳ ἐξέμεσεν, πυλωροὶ δὲ ᾅδου εἰδόντες ἔφριξαν. "Hades in fear vomited forth its dead, the gatekeepers of Hades trembled when they saw him (i.e. Christ)." Job 38.17: ἀνοίγονται δέ σοι φόβῳ πύλαι θανάτου, πυλωροὶ δὲ ᾅδου ἰδόντες σε ἔπτηξαν; "Did the gates of death open for you in fear, did the gatekeepers of Hades crouch down when they saw you?"

[170] Cf. Kelly (1989), 428–32: "Baptism"; Merras (1995), 192.

[171] Brock (1992a), 11: "While individual elements of this imagery are indeed quite often to be found in Greek and Latin writers, it would appear that it is in the Syriac tradition that the imagery is the most consistently and fully developed."

tism".[172] Such descriptions in which the deliverance of death is expressed in terms of clothing, linked with the Fall and baptism, are typical of Syriac tradition, but are found also in Greek tradition.[173] It is impossible to say whether the epithets of the Akathistos reflect Syriac influence at all. The interpretation of these epithets can certainly be completed with other aspects and emphases, but here the main point is that both the victory over Hades and baptism occur in the womb of Mary, who is described as the Church.

It is quite evident that the concept Mary as the Church demands further investigation which is beyond the scope of this research. On the other hand, within this concept there are no elements which are incompatible with the early Church or its ecclesiology. It may be noted that strophe 7 taken as a whole does not stress the shepherds' scene in the way Luke does, who asserts: "All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them."[174] In the Akathistos the birth of Christ is witnessed by the angels, but what the shepherds actually bear witness to is the existence of the Church, which is likened to Mary.

Strophes 8–10

Three strophes, 8–10, are dedicated to the Magi, who first proclaimed Christ to the gentiles. According to Matthew the Magi came from the east following a star which they had observed.[175] They went to King Herod to inquire after the new-born king of the Jews. Herod was frightened and called together all the chief priests and the scribes in order to hear where the Messiah was to be born. When he had heard what was written by the prophet, he secretly called for the Magi and sent them to Bethlehem. The star went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. Overwhelmed with joy they entered the house, saw

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[172] Brock (1992a), 12.

[173] According to Brock (1992a), 2, there is a basic difference between Syriac and Greek tradition: "Whereas Semitic tradition is far more concerned with what garments are *put on*, culminating in the paradisiacal 'garment of glory', Greek tradition lays much more emphasis on what is *taken off*." This difference does not play any role in the Akathistos.

[174] Luke 2.18.

[175] Matt. 2.1–2. The 'Magi' from μάγος, *a Magian*, one of the wise men or seers in Persia who interpreted dreams (Liddell and Scott 1968). In strophe 9 the Magi are called the "children of Chaldaeans"; Χαλδαῖος, *an astrologer*, caster of nativities, since the Chaldaeans were much given to such pursuits (Liddell and Scott 1968).

the child with Mary his mother, knelt down, paid him homage, and gave their gifts. Because of a warning dream they did not return to Herod, but took another road to their own country.[176] The Akathistos recounts this story, but we discover an essential conceptual distinction between the two narratives in the attributes of Christ and Mary.

In the Akathistos the star is called θεοδρόμος ('moving towards God'), which suggests that the Magi expect to see God (8.1).[177] In the Gospel the star was to show the Magi the king of the Jews. In the Akathistos they find the mighty king (8.4) and attain the unattainable one (8.5). The child is not mentioned. Mary is neither named nor called mother. She is the Virgin, who holds in her hands him who with his hand fashioned man (9.1–2). The fashioner or the creator is seen by the Magi in the form of a servant (δούλου μορφήν, 9.4) but perceived as master (δεσπότην, 9.3). The salutations are exclaimed to the blessed one (9.5). The Magi are called God's messengers (10.1).[178]

In the section on "Christology" I mentioned the theological significance of the reference to the 'form of a servant' in the Theotokos controversy. In this context we see that the metaphor the "form of a servant" is the only reference to Christ's humanity, for the other attributes refer to or emphasize Christ's divine nature ("mighty king", "unattainable", "he who with his hand fashioned humankind", "master").[179] In addition, we find a paradox, which emerges by juxtaposing the Creator, who fashioned humankind with his hand, and the Virgin, who holds the Creator in her hands. Clearly this description is analogous to the idea of the container of the uncontainable (χώρα ἀχωρήτου). Here the contrast between the Virgin of the Akathistos and Mary, the mother with her child, found in Matthew, is extremely striking.

The Akathistos maintains that the Magi fulfilled a prophecy (10.3), but the prophecies Matthew cites do not form a logical link to the narra-

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176 Matt. 2.3–12. Cf. *Protevangelium Jacobi* XXI.

177 Lampe (1961): "θεοδρόμος, *moving to God*; of the star of Bethlehem."

178 Lampe (1961): "θεοφόρος, *bearing God*, 4.b. of men as inspired, esp. prophets."

179 In Philippians 2.6–8, where the metaphor μορφὴ δούλου originates, the humanity is expressed also non-metaphorically: ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος "being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form" . Correspondingly the divinity of Christ is stated: ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων ... ἴσα θεῷ, "in the form of God . . . equality with God".

tion of the Akathistos.[180] Therefore we may ask what the prophecy is which the Akathistos refers to? Addison mentions two traditional prophecies, Numbers 24.17 and Isaiah 60.6, but they do not clarify the question, if they are to be taken as references to Matthew 2.12,[181] as I understand Addison's explanation.[182] I think that the prophecy is concerned with the purpose of the whole journey. Matthew recounts that the Magi came to pay homage to the king of the Jews. However, Herod and all Jerusalem sought the birth place of Christ. Matthew does not say directly that to Herod and the people of Jerusalem the star signified Jesus, but it is evident from the context. So, the star is involved with the purpose of the journey of the Magi, and with the θεοδρόμος star the Akathistos begins the Magi's scene. In early Christian interpretations, e.g. in Irenaeus,[183] an oracle of the prophet Balaam, saying "a star shall come out of Jacob",[184] was regarded as a testimony of the birth of the Messiah. I consider it most probable that this was the prophecy to which the Akathistos alludes, because we can confirm the significance of the prophecy of the star in iconography, which reflects the interpretations of Christian authors. Wellen relates that in the earliest iconography on the theme of the Incarnation the prophet Balaam is pointing out the star.

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[180] Matt. 2.6: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel"; Mic. 5.1, 3; 2 Sam. 5.2; 1 Chr. 11.2.

[181] Matt. 2.12: "And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road." Num. 24.17: "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near—a star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab and the territory of Shethites." Isa. 60.6: "A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord."

[182] Cf. Addison (1983), 43.

[183] *Adversus Haereses* III.9.2: Vnus igitur et idem Deus qui a prophetis praedicatus est et ab Euangelio adnuntiatus, et huius Filius qui ex fructu uentris David, hoc est ex Dauid Virgine, et Emmanuel. Cuius et stellam Balaam quidem sic prophetauit: Orietur stella ex Iacob et surget Dux in Israel. Matthaeus autem Magos ab Oriente uenientes ait dixisse: *Vidimus enim stellam eius in Oriente et uenimus adorare eum.* "God is one and the same, who was foretold by the prophets and proclaimed by the Gospel, and his son who arose from the fruit of the womb of David, that is from the Virgin from David, and Emmanuel. His star was prophesied by Balaam thus: A star will arise from Jacob and a leader arise in Israel. And Matthew says the Magi coming from the east declared: 'We have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.'"

[184] Num. 24.17.

Later he is seen together with the Magi. In the sixth century Balaam disappears—but his star is left.[185]

Addison seems to suggest that the meaning of strophe 10 is to celebrate the Magi "as the first heralds of Christ to the pagans".[186] I would say that as the theme of the hymn is the Incarnation, the main concern is the prophecy of Christ, which the Magi fulfilled. The deeper meaning of strophe 10 concerns God's Incarnation, though the text may give the impression that it is written to celebrate the Magi. I believe that the great respect given in early Christianity to the wise men of the Orient is expressed in the hymn in another, indirect way. For in the examination of the structure of the hymn one thing becomes evident: the Annunciation excluded, all Gospel themes are discussed in one single strophe, but the story of the Magi in three strophes. There can be no doubt that such an emphasis brings out the significance of the theme. Obviously, compared with the entire hymn, the Christological or Mariological contents of the Magi strophes are not of exceptional significance. Therefore I claim that it is just the emphasis or the number of the strophes which reflects early Christian thinking in which the Magi possessed an extraordinary place.[187] In the Byzantine machinery of propaganda the Magi scene was a most suitable means for Christians to excoriate the Jews, who did not believe in Christ, unlike the wise men from afar.

The salutations of the Magi are characterized by their 'subjective Persian' viewpoint, which negatively can be seen as an intentional stance against Persians, who since antiquity were the political archfoes of the Greeks, and in whom the vices despised and feared by Christians were seen as personified. It is fair to ask whether some of the salutations contain allusions to identifiable historical situations in the relationship between Persia and the Byzantine Empire, but it is plain that the history of the enmities between them is too long to allow an objectively acceptable interpretation.[188] Nonetheless, something can be stated. Amongst the salutations there is the sentence: "Hail, you who quenched the worship of fire" (9.14), which refers to the fire ritual of Zoroastrian religious cere-

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[185] Wellen (1960), 14–16.

[186] Addison (1983), 43.

[187] Early iconography corroborates my notion; Wellen (1960), 55, note that no theme was so prevalent in early Christian times as the arrival of the first converts from paganism.

[188] Cf. Trypanis's comment (1968: 23–4) on the imaginative theory of J. Rehork.

mony.[189] Fire-worshipping of the Persians was hundred of years older than Christianity. Therefore the view of Trypanis, "the canticum was written in a period, when the fire-worshippers were still seen as the great opponents of Christianity, and this does not exclude the days of Justinian I and Chosroes I"[190] demands a modification: the argument of fire-worship does not exclude the days of Theodosius II and his sister Pulcheria either.

When the focus is shifted to the time of Theodosius, we will see that a war against the Persians preceded the Ephesian period (421–2). If historical allusions are sought in strophe 9, that conflict and its influence on the religious climate can be taken into consideration.[191] It is not difficult to imagine that at the time of the war and still long after it, in a society with refugees from the Persian areas of persecution, the juxtaposition between the 'Persian vices' and the 'Christian virtues' flourished, and whatever manifestations of it emerged, the Byzantines' notion of their moral superiority would be reflected in them. I understand the salutation "Hail, guide of the Persians to temperance" (9.16) to correspond to that kind of sentiment, but of course nothing proves that the utterance goes back to those days. Yet, in any case, the Persians were topical in the Ephesian period, as the assurance of Nestorius to the Emperor indicates: "Help me destroy the heretics, and I will help you destroy the Persians."[192] Illustrative of the attitude towards the Persians is also the reproach which Cyril of Alexandria directs to Nestorius in his homily at the Council of Ephesus: "Are you not ashamed to make God quite like the Persian kingdom?"[193] The stereotypical position towards the Persians is certainly reflected in the Akathistos, but the hymn cannot thereby be fixed to any specific historical event.

It is evident that in the salutations of strophe 9 the economy of salvation has been adapted to the situation of the Magi, even though only two

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[189] "Zoroastrianism, the official religion of the Sassanian Empire and the ancient traditional religion of the Persian Nation until the triumph of islamization" (*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, s.v. "Zoroastrianism").

[190] Trypanis (1968), 24.

[191] Holum (1977). Cf. Holum (1989), 102–11. (Holum calls the war of 421–2 Pulcheria's crusade.) Dealing closely with this war, Holum's interpretations of the much-discussed "Long-Cross Solidi" (1989: 162–7, 172) and of the translation of the relics of St Stephen to Constantinople (Holum and Vikan 1979: 113–33) afford a credible illustration of the *Zeitgeist* of that period.

[192] Socrates 7.29.5. cited by Holum (1989), 150.

[193] Hom. 4, *PG* 77.993C: Οὐκ ᾐδέσθης Θεὸν ἐξομοιῶν Περσικῇ βασιλείᾳ;

verses (9.10–11) disclose that the framework is the plan of God: "Hail, you who have cast the inhuman tyrant from his dominion; hail, you who showed forth the Lord Christ, who loves humankind" (9.10–11).[194] Referring to the Fall, the cause of the Incarnation,[195] this antithesis is analogous to the antithesis Eve–Mary, and consequently Mary is given the role of the Second Eve. The epithet *tyrannos apanthropos* would suit Herod well, as Trypanis seems to think,[196] but the idea of the opposite forces of the devil and God (ἀπανθρωπία and φιλανθρωπία) is so striking that to interpret the tyrant as an allusion to any historical person is out of the question. Other salutations represent the following distinguishable aspects in the image of Mary: a typological reference (9.6), a trinitarian expression (9.9), Christian ideology (9.12, 9.14), ascetical ideals (9.13, 9.15–16) and the attitude towards the Persians (9.16).

The epithet "mother of the star that never sets" (9.6) is typological, because the 'star' refers to the 'star of Jacob', originating in an Old Testament prophecy.[197] The "bright dawn of the mystical day" (9.7) is a poetical paraphrase of the birth of Christ from Mary. The 'day' is an analogy of light or the sun, the attributes of Christ. The word μυστικός ('mystical') refers to the divinity of Christ, and should perhaps be linked together with the following two epithets, "you who closed the furnace of deception" (9.8) and "you who protect the initiates of the Trinity" (9.9).[198] They allude to the Zoroastrian religion, but the idea is not quite clear on the level of the narration of the hymn.

In Homily 5, which praises the Theotokos, Proclus counts the miracles related to the virgin birth: "The fire in Babylon stood in awe before the number of the Trinity."[199] This fire refers to the fire which had no power over the three men whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, as Daniel de-

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[194] Cf. Lampe (1961): τύραννος and ἀπανθρωπία, in reference to the devil; φιλανθρωπία and φιλάνθρωπος, in reference to God and Christ.

[195] Proclus, Hom. 1, *PG* 65.688C; *ACO* I.1.106.11–16: οὐ περιεῖδεν τοίνυν ἐπὶ πολὺ τὴν φύσιν τυραννουμένην ὁ φύσει βασιλεύς, οὐκ ἀφῆκεν εἰς τέλος εἶναι τῷ διαβόλῳ ὑπεύθυνον ὁ φιλοικτίρμων θεός. "So our natural king did not allow our nature to remain for ever under tyranny. The merciful God did not permit us to remain subject to the devil to the end."

[196] Trypanis (1968), 23.

[197] Num. 24.17.

[198] Lampe (1961): "μυστικός, 2.a Trinity itself is called μυστική."

[199] Hom. 5, *PG* 65.720A; Constas (1994), 219/231: τὸ πῦρ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι Τριάδος ἀριθμὸν ᾐδέσθη.

scribes.[200] On the basis of this Old Testament passage the epithet "you who protect the initiates of the Trinity" seems to be explainable. Babylon is mentioned explicitly in the hymn (10.2). Proclus's statement suggests that the three men were considered as the type of the Trinity, but the idea of Proclus is that the miracle of the virgin birth is to be compared with the miracle of those three men, who symbolize the Trinity. I take the "protector" (φυλάττουσα, 9.9) to refer to the virgin birth,[201] and the "initiates of the Trinity" to refer through the type to the divine nature of Christ, who is one of the Holy Trinity. When the epithet "you who closed the furnace of deception" (9.8) is taken into account, the totality gives the impression that there is a level of hidden meaning, concerned with some heresy of the Trinity. Nothing in the context points particularly to the Arian heresy. Instead, in a hymn whose emergence is involved with the Nestorian controversy, an allusion to the claim of Nestorius's opponents could be possible. If so, it goes back to the 'two sons theory', to the accusation that Nestorius's teaching of the nature of Christ implies a quaternity instead of the trinity.[202]

In the salutations of 9.12–15 Christian ideology is mixed with ascetical reflections, a mixture which represents the superiority of Christianity over paganism ("Hail, deliverance from the pagan worship", 9.12; "Hail, liberation from miry deeds", 9.13). Therefore it is not surprising to find ascetical Christian virtues (ἀπαθεία 'freedom from passions' and σωφροσύνη 'prudence') as if the Persians, who were considered immoderate libertines, had desired them ("Hail, you who released us from the flame of passions", 9.15; "Hail, guide of the Persians to temperance", 9.16). It is natural that the fire-cult appears in this context ("Hail, you who quenched the worship of fire", 9.14). At the end of the narration the Magi utter a prophecy of the universal meaning of Mary: "Hail, joy of all generations" (9.17), which is associated with Mary's own words, "From now on all generations will call me blessed".[203]

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[200] Dan. 3, esp. 21–8.

[201] Cf. 13.1–4 (note the word φυλάξας).

[202] E.g. Proclus, Hom. 1, *PG* 65.689A; *ACO* I.1.1.106.22–5: εἰ ἄλλος ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ ἄλλος ὁ Θεὸς λόγος, οὐκέτι τριάς, ἀλλὰ τέτρας. μὴ σχίσῃς τὸν τῆς οἰκονομίας χιτῶνα τὸν ἄνωθεν ὑφαντόν· μὴ μαθητεύσῃς Ἀρείῳ. "If Christ and God the Word are not the same person, there is no more trinity; there is a quaternity. Do not rend the tunic of the Incarnation which is woven from above. Be not a pupil of Arius."

[203] Cf. Luke 2.45.

In spite of the various aspects the salutations represent, the image of Mary is coherent, because the Persian theme holds the different elements together. The epithet based on typology (9.6) is concerned with the divinity of Christ and comes closest to the concept Theotokos, likewise verses 9.7 and 9.10 as referring to the nature of Christ. Verses 9.8 and 9.10–11 represent the concept Second Eve, verses 9.12–17 the Second Eve in a 'Persian adaptation', upon which are projected the attitude towards the Persians and the ascetical virtues.

Strophe 11

According to Matthew Joseph took the child and his mother and fled to Egypt in order to avoid Herod, who attempted to destroy the child.[204] Strophe 11 does not reflect that story. Instead, it owes its idea to an apocryphal text, the *Pseudevangelium Matthei*.[205] There is a story of an incident in Sotinen, an Egyptian town, in whose temple 365 idols fell in pieces to the ground when Mary entered it with her child.[206] The Akathistos alludes to that story ("for her idols, O Saviour, fell down unable to endure your power", 11.3–4), and ultimately to a prophecy of Isaiah, which *Pseudevangelium Matthei* quotes.[207] *Pseudevangelium Matthei* tells that all the people of Sotinen "believed in the Lord God through Jesus Christ".[208] It is not clear whether the Akathistos alludes to the people of Sotinen by "those who were saved from them" i.e. the idols (11.5), and who cry the salutations to the Theotokos. Be that as it may, in *Pseudevangelium Matthei* their adoration is directed to the child, whereas in the Akathistos the addressee of their gratitude is Mary. This shift is interesting, because on the basis of the introduction (9.1–4) one would expect the salutations to be addressed to the Saviour. If ever a passage of the Akathistos gives the impression that there was once an ancient hymn to which the salutations were added, it is this one.[209] But the matter is simply explained by the poetical structure of the hymn—by the principle

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[204] Matt. 2.13–15.

[205] This apocryphal text seems to have been composed before the third century in Egypt; cf. Elliott (1993), 19; Schneemelcher (1990), 309.

[206] *Pseudevangelium Matthei* XXII–XXIII.

[207] *Pseudevangelium Matthei* XXII.

[208] *Pseudevangelium Matthei* XXIV.

[209] Cf. Maas (1905), 644.

that the salutations of the odd strophes are addressed to Mary. On the other hand, this 'illogical' attribution of the salutations, and especially the content of them, bears witness to a certain stage of Mariology. Once it was possible to call Mary the "rock, giving water to those who thirst for life" (11.11), in other words, to employ an epithet which unquestionably is identified with Christ,[210] the notion of Mary as the prerequisite of the Incarnation must have been well established.

The first four epithets, the "elevation of humans" (11.6), the "downfall of demons" (11.7), "you who trampled upon the delusion of error" (11.8), and "you who refuted the deceit of the idols" (11.9), can be seen as allusions to the story of *Pseudevangelium Matthei*, but it is obvious that they describe a consequence of the Fall. That is nothing less than the victory of the light of truth over the darkness of falsehood (11.1–4) through the Incarnation, an idea which, seen from the Mariological viewpoint, is conceptually linked with the Second Eve. While the liberation of Egypt from idolatry is treated up to verse 11.9, the rest of the epithets deal with the liberation of the people of Israel from Egypt.

With one exception (11.15) the epithets of 11.10–17 refer to the passages of the Exodus, which in patristic tradition were interpreted as prefigurations or types. For this reason the following epithets may be called typological: the "sea that drowned the spiritual Pharaoh" (11.10);[211] the "rock, giving water to those who thirst for life" (11.11);[212] the "pillar of fire, guiding those in darkness" (11.12);[213] the "protection of the world, wider than the cloud" (11.13), "food, following after manna" (11.14);[214] "promised land . . . from whom flow milk and honey" (11.16–17).[215] As a type was understood to constitute a testimony of Christ, each of these epithets should refer to the relationship between Christ and Mary. In a careful reading it becomes evident that the epithets do not focus on that relationship. What does this indicate?

At the time of the composition of the Akathistos there was a widespread consensus on the interpretations of the most common types of

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[210] 1 Cor. 10.4: ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός. "For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ."

[211] Exod. 14.27–30.

[212] Exod. 17.3–6; Num. 20.6–16; Deut. 8.15.

[213] Exod. 13.21–2; 14.19–20, cf. Num. 9.15–23.

[214] Exod. 16.13–15, 31, 35.

[215] Exod. 3.17, 33.1–3, Lev. 20.24.

Exodus,[216] so that one would suppose that the words 'sea', 'Pharaoh', 'rock', 'cloud', 'manna' in the Marian epithets carry the meanings set out by Theodoret of Cyrrhus with reference to 1 Corinthians 10.2–4.[217] Yet this does not tell us why they are selected to represent Mary in the Akathistos. However, if a typological interpretation of the epithets of 11.10–14 is nonetheless attempted, there are in fact parallels which clarify the thinking of the Fathers. The first example is from Gregory of Nyssa's *De Vita Moysis*, an allegorical treatise on ascetical life. The following passage, relating Gregory's teaching on the heavenly bread, the manna, brings out an argument which is relevant to our understanding of the typological epithets in the Akathistos:

> You no doubt perceive the true food in the figure of the history: The bread which came from heaven is not some incorporeal thing. . . . Neither ploughing nor sowing produced the body of this bread, but the earth which remained unchanged was found full of this divine food, of which the hungry partake. This miracle teaches in anticipation the mystery of the Virgin. This bread, then, that does not come from the earth is the Word."[218]

This demonstrates that Gregory regards the manna as a type of the Word incarnate born of the Virgin. Apart from this interpretation, Gregory states explicitly that the miracle of the manna prefigures the

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[216] Much of the teachings of Clement of Alexandria, Philo, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Diodore of Tarsus, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia etc. recurs in Theodoret of Cyrrhus's *Quaestiones in Exodum*, cf. *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, s.v. "Exodus II".

[217] *Quaestiones in Exodum*, *PG* 80.257AB: τύπον ἔχει τῆς κολυμβήθρας ἡ θάλαττα· ἡ δὲ νεφέλη, τοῦ πνεύματος· ὁ δὲ Μωσῆς, τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ· τοῦ σταυροῦ δὲ, ἡ ῥάβδος· τοῦ διαβόλου, ὁ Φαραώ· τῶν δαιμόνων, οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι· τὸ δὲ μάννα, τῆς θείας τροφῆς, τὸ δὲ τῆς πέτρας ὕδωρ, τοῦ σωτηρίου αἵματος. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι μετὰ τὸ διαβῆναι τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν, καὶ τῆς ξένης τροφῆς, καὶ τοῦ παραδόξου ἀπήλαυσαν νάματος· οὕτως ἡμεῖς μετὰ τὸ σωτήριον βάπτισμα τῶν θείων μεταλαμβάνομεν μυστήριων. "The sea is the type of the baptismal font; the cloud of the Spirit, Moses of the Saviour Christ; the rod of the cross; Pharaoh of the devil; the Egyptians of the demons; the manna of divine food; the water from the rock of the blood of the Saviour. As those [Israelites], after having crossed the Red Sea, marched away by means of strange food and paradoxal springs, so we after the baptism of Christ partake in divine mysteries."

[218] Gregory of Nyssa (trans. Malherbe and Ferguson, 1978), 88; II.139–40: Νοεῖς δὲ πάντως τὴν ἀληθῆ ταύτην βρῶσιν διὰ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν αἰνίγματος, ὅτι ὁ ἄρτος, ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, οὐκ ἀσώματόν τι χρῆμα ἐστι. . . . Τὸ δὲ σῶμα τούτου τοῦ ἄρτου οὔτε ἄροσις οὔτε σπορὰ ἐγεώργησεν, ἀλλ' ἡ γῆ, οἵα ἐστὶ μείνασα, πλήρης εὑρίσκεται τῆς τοιαύτης θείας τροφῆς, ἧς οἱ πεινῶντες μετέχουσι, τὸ κατὰ τὴν Παρθένον μυστήριον διὰ τῆς θαυματοποιίας ταύτης προπαιδευόμενοι. Οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ ἀγεώργητος ἄρτος καὶ λόγος ἐστί.

'mystery of the Virgin'. This idea has a parallel in a homily of Proclus, who employs the figures of Exodus in order to emphasize the mystery of the Incarnation:

> What sort of a miracle is amazing? Heaven raining bread or God wearing flesh? Clouds raining upon quails or the Virgin bringing forth the Word incarnate? The sea, divided as a passage, or virginity, not spoilt, after the birth-giving? The rod making the rock flow as springs or the cross sanctifying the world? The rod of Aaron growing fruit or the Virgin, knowing no wedlock, gushing forth milk? The pillar of cloud or the star which shines more brilliant than the sun? Respect the miracles and worship the Incarnate![219]

This passage implies that to Proclus each one of the types of Exodus, each miracle he happens to mention, bears witness to the mystery of the Incarnation, or to be more precise, to the different aspects of the Incarnation. I think that such is the justification for the use of the typology in the epithets of 11.10–14. If the typological way of thinking of Proclus is further followed, the land of promise (11.16–17) or the goal of the journey of the Israelites, should be likened to the Incarnation, in which the promise of salvation God gave to the people of Israel is seen to be fulfilled. Once the fulfilment or the Incarnation occurs in Mary, she can be called the promised land. From the eschatological point of view the typological epithets really point to the relationship between Christ and Mary. Even so, it is very clear that they do not primarily focus on that relationship, and the Christological image of Mary, which they shape, does not exhaust the picture the epithets of 11.6–17 display.

If we now investigate the epithets purely on the basis of the narration, there comes into view a vision of people who are travelling towards the promised land under the protection of Mary (11.12–13). We could ask who those people are. To give perspective to the matter, I will begin with a treatise on chastity, which does not speak about Mary. It is the *Symposium* of Methodius of Olympus (d. 312), a work which is of a certain relevance to the study of the Akathistos, because it had a pro-

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[219] Πρόκλου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως εἰς τὸ γενέθλιον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in: Martin (1941), 44–51 (Caro 1971–3: no. 29, date March 431): 47–8: Ποῖον θαῦμα εἰς κατάπληξην; οὐρανὸς ἄρτον βρέχων ἢ Θεὸν σαρκοφόρον; νεφέλαι ὀρτυγομήτραν ἐπομβροῦσαι ἢ παρθένος Λόγον σεσωματωμένον ἀποκυήσασα; θάλασσα διαβάσει σχιζομένη ἢ παρθενία μετὰ τόκον μὴ φθειρομένη; ῥάβδος πέτραν ποιήσασα πηγάσαι νάματα ἢ σταυρὸς κόσμον ἁγιάζων; ῥάβδος Ἀαρὼν βλαστάνουσα καρπὸν ἢ παρθένος ἀπειρόγαμος γάλα πηγάζουσα; στῦλος νεφέλης ἢ ἀστὴρ ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον λάμπων; Αἰδέσθητι τὰ θαύματα καὶ προσκύνησον τὸν σαρκωθέντα.

found influence on the stream of ascetical thought.[220] In the *Symposium* a virgin's life is presented as follows:

> For just as the Israelites of those days first travelled from the border of Egypt and came to the Tabernacles, and after departing from here again they came to the Promised Land, so it is with us. Setting out from here and making my way from the Egypt of this life . . . I shall arrive in heaven, just as the Jews after the rest of the Tabernacles came to the Promised Land.[221]

Such, then, is according to Methodius the earthly journey of a virgin towards heaven—like the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the land of promise. Methodius is convinced that only the chaste can enter heaven, therefore it is not surprising that the 'church of Methodius' has been characterized as a community of virgins.[222]

Let us go back to the Akathistos. Thematically enthusiasm for virginity and chastity is clearly to be seen in the hymn, comparable to the ascetical idealism of the *Symposium*. However, from the Akathistos one cannot infer that those who are on their journey to heaven under the protection of Mary are just virgins, for the hymn proclaims that the whole world is participating: "Hail, protection of the world, wider than the cloud" (11.13), which definitely points to Christians in general.[223] Thus ultimately the epithet of 11.13 is concerned with the Church. With this observation the epithets from Exodus 11.10–14 unfold in the tradition as exemplified by Theodoret: the "sea that drowned the spiri-

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[220] Methodius, *The Symposium* (trans. Musurillo, 1958), 3.

[221] *SC* 95, 280: Ὥσπερ γὰρ, ἐξελθόντες τῶν ὅρων ἐκείνων τῆς Αἰγύπτου ὥδευσαν πρῶτον καὶ ἦλθον εἰς τὰς σκηνὰς κάκεῖθεν ἀπάραντες πάλιν ἦλθον εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς. Ὁδεύσασα γὰρ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐξελθοῦσα κἀγὼ τῆς Αἰγύπτου τούτου τοῦ βίου . . . εἶτα αὖθις ἑπομένη τῷ διεληλυθότι "τοὺς οὐρανοὺς" Ἰησοῦ ἔρχομαι πάλιν καθάπερ κἀκεῖνοι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν τῆς σκηνοπηγίας εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, τοὺς οὐρανους. 'The Tabernacles' is Methodius's allegory of chaste life. To put it very simply: those who are devoted to virginity and have cultivated their chastity by decorating their tabernacles (i.e. bodies) with the boughs of the chaste tree can be counted among the saints who celebrate the Feast of Tabernacle in heaven, cf. *SC* 95, 131–40.

[222] Musurillo (in Methodius, *The Symposium*), 18–19: "this bride is the Church, our Mother, and she is attended by the community of virgins on earth as she will be one day in heaven." Methodius's highly allegorical exegesis of Revelation 12, in which "the woman clothed with the sun" is interpreted as the Church (cf. ibid. 109 ff.) proves that the Church was called the Mother, Jerusalem, the Bride, the Mount Sion, the Temple and God's Tabernacle. Apparently the Akathistos reflects neither Methodius's interpretation nor Revelation 12.

[223] Cf. e.g. Heb. 11.13–16.

tual Pharaoh" (11.10) refers to the baptismal font, which drowned the devil;[224] "rock, giving water to those who thirst for life" (11.11) refers to the blood of the Saviour;[225] "pillar of fire, guiding those in darkness" and the "protection of the world, wider than the cloud" (11.12–13) refer to the Spirit;[226] and "food, following after manna" (11.14) to divine food.[227] Following Theodoret, all these epithets are involved with the divine mysteries of baptism,[228] likewise also the non-typological paraphrase of the manna epithet, the "minister of holy joy" (11.15), which refers to the eucharist.[229] That there are found in the epithets the means of grace by which Christ has united his people together into the Church, that is, baptism and eucharist, signifies that the narration is to be interpreted as an allegory of the Church, a vision of pilgrims who are making their way from the Egypt of this life to heaven.

This explains why the typological epithets do not focus on the relationship between Christ and Mary: the epithets are aimed at describing the life of Christians within the Church on the allegorical or spiritual level. This raises a new question concerning Mary's position. What justifies calling her by the epithets which make up the allegory? First it must be noted that an allegory is a *story*, one which bears the potential for allegorical interpretation.[230] In this case it is the story of deliverance, both of Egypt from idolatry, and of the people of Israel from Egypt. Plainly these events have no direct connection with Mary, for in the former case the liberation takes place through the power of Christ incarnate, and in the latter the liberation prefigures the Incarnation as the fulfilment of God's promise to the people of Israel. One has to infer that the Incarnation is the common factor binding these two stories together on a conceptual level. Since the Incarnation occurs in Mary, all the events which precede *ta eschata*, and all the events which shall take place

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224 Cf. "Pharaoh" and the "Crossing the Red Sea" in Gregory of Nyssa's *De Vita Moysis*, II.73–88, 121–9, esp. n. 136. Note also the baptismal aspect discussed in the section on "The Second Eve".

225 Cf. the "rock", *De Vita Moysis*, II.136, n. 156.

226 The "pillar" is the same as the "cloud", cf. Exod. 13.21–2. "In this crossing the cloud served as guide. Those before us interpreted the cloud well as the grace of the Holy Spirit, who guides towards the Good those who are worthy." *De Vita Moysis*, II.121, notes 134 and 135.

227 Cf. "The Manna", *De Vita Moysis*, II.137–47; the "bread of heaven" cf. John 6.25–59.

228 Cf. note 217 above.

229 Lampe (1961): "τρυφή, also in reference to the eucharist."

230 Cf. Wilken (1998).

after it, relate to her (and, through the Incarnation, to the Church). Furthermore, because the narrative begins with epithets implying the Fall, Mary is to be understood as fulfilling the role of the Second Eve. As the Second Eve is conceptually the prerequisite for the Incarnation, all expressions in the epithets are subordinated to it; otherwise, for instance, it would not be possible to call Mary by an epithet of Christ (the 'rock'). In other words the concept of Second Eve is what justifies all the epithets which make up the allegory.

In view of the structure of the hymn, I take the function of strophe 11 to be to constitute a testimony to Christ. In this respect there are two relevant prophecies. The one is stated by *Pseudevangelium Matthei*: "Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence.'"[231] The other is stated by Matthew: "This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'"[232] Proclus cites both of these prophecies.[233] The conclusion he makes on the basis of Matthew exemplifies the dominance of the idea that a prophecy constitutes a testimony: "He did not go to Egypt in order to escape Herod but to fulfil the prophecy."[234] The scene from Egypt in the arch of triumph of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore is indicative of how this particular prophecy was seen as significant at the period of Ephesus,[235] and explains why the theme of Egypt was dealt with in the Akathistos.

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[231] *Pseudevangelium Matthei* XXIII: Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per prophetam Isaiam Ecce dominus veniet super nubem levem et ingredietur Egyptum, et movebatur a facie eius omnia manufacta Egyptiorum. Cf. Isa. 19.1.

[232] Matt. 2.15: ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου. Cf. Hos.11.1.

[233] Martin (1941), 36.

[234] Martin (1941), 36: Γέγραπται γὰρ· "Ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν Υἱόν μου". Οὐ γὰρ Ἡρώδην φεύγων εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἀπῆλθεν ἀλλὰ πληρῶν τὴν προφητείαν.

[235] In the scene Christ is standing at the gate of the town Sotinen. Wellen (1960), 113–15, interprets the scene as an *adventus domini*. I do not agree with Wellen. Christ is not represented as an infant in the arms of his mother as *Pseudevangelium Matthei* recounts, but as a small boy; hence the scene cannot show the moment when Christ is coming to Sotinen. On the contrary, the scene concerns his leaving Egypt, which points to the prophecy.

Strophe 12

Strophe 12 describes the meeting of Christ and Simeon, which took place on the feast of the Purification and is told in the Gospel of Luke.[236] The Church celebrates it under the name of Hypapante (ὑπαπάντη) or Presentation in the Temple. According to Luke, Simeon was a righteous and devout Israelite, to whom the Holy Spirit had revealed that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah. When the child was brought to be presented to the Lord in the Temple in Jerusalem, Simeon took the child in his arms and praised God, because he perceived that his eyes had seen the salvation of God. The Akathistos recounts that an infant was given to Simeon, who perceived in him the perfect God (12.3–4). The emphasis on the word τέλειος ('perfect') is striking. Therefore it is tempting to associate it with a scandal which emerged during the Council of Ephesus and characterized the Theotokos schism: Nestorius's opponents insisted that he had refused to acknowledge as God an infant a couple of months old.[237] Such historical background would explain better the juxtaposition between the infant and the 'perfect' God than the Gospel, which refers to the Messiah by the words σωτήριον, φῶς and δόξα ('salvation', 'light' and 'glory'). The early fifth-century homilist Hesychius of Jerusalem also describes the Hypapante by contrasting the infant and God.[238]

The testimonies of the first half of the hymn conclude with the message of the Gospel that Simeon as representative of the Jewish people, "looking forward to the consolation of Israel",[239] saw fulfilled the prophecy of the Messiah. The point of the Akathistos is, however, that Simeon saw Christ with his own eyes. The Hypapante strophe forms a

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[236] Luke 2.25–35.

[237] Cf. McGuckin (1994), 64–5. McGuckin surmises that Nestorius's primary intention was to ridicule the Alexandrian rhetoric, which applied paradoxes such as the "swaddling bands of God". I consider it probable that this scandal is alluded to by Proclus in his letter to the Armenian Church: Εἰ δέ τισιν σκανδάλου παραίτια γίνεται σπάργανα . . . "If the swaddling bands become a stumbling-block to someone . . . " (*ACO* III.2.191.7).

[238] Hom. 6, *PG* 93.1468B = Aubineau (1978), 1.1.1–6; : Ἡ μὲν ἑορτὴ λέγεται καθαρσίων . . . ὅλον γὰρ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται τῆς σαρκώσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ μυστήριον, ὅλον διαγράφεται τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ παράστασιν. Ἐν ᾗ βρέφος ὁ Χριστὸς ἐβαστάχθη καὶ Θεὸς ὡμολογήθη. "The feast is called the Purification . . . for it fully sums up the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ, it fully draws out the presentation of the only-begotten Son. In it the infant was raised as Christ and confessed as God." Caro dates the homily to 410–20.

[239] Luke 2.25.

link between the two halves of the hymn, and with it the climax of the hymn has been reached: God the Logos becomes visible.

Strophe 13

Because the nature of Christ was discussed in detail in the section "Christology", I will not pursue it any further, for in the rest of the hymn other issues arise which are fundamental to the work's character. At the culmination of the hymn, in strophe 13, is to be found the key expression of the two main frameworks which the Akathistos exhibits: νέαν κτίσιν ("a new creation has the Creator revealed", 13.1). The 'new creation' is to be traced back to both Irenaeus's theory of recapitulation and the realm of ascetical spirituality. The idea of recapitulation related to Mary provides the framework of the whole hymn, which the ascetical ideas intertwine with. The second half of the hymn discloses how extensively the author has drawn on ascetical teaching. The great ideas of asceticism, imitation and perfection, which had appeared since Paul in all writers who deal with the theme of virginity or chastity, are taken for granted. A picture of chaste life is given which corresponds with the description of Gregory of Nyssa's treatise *De Virginitate*, with the exception that Gregory's view of the superiority of the state of virginity over marriage is not spoken aloud in the hymn. It is noteworthy that it is in precisely this work of Gregory that Mary is introduced as an example of the virtue of virginity.

In dealing with the concept of Second Eve I outlined the theory of recapitulation to make comprehensible the unique role which Mary was accorded by the early Fathers, and which the Akathistos exhibits. The concept of Second Eve does not, however, represent the essential thesis of Irenaeus's theory of the Incarnation as recapitulation such as it is found in book III of the *Adversus Haereses*, viz. the restoration of Adam in Christ, in which context Mary is introduced as the virgin earth.[240] According to Irenaeus the "image and likeness of God",[241] in which Adam was created, but which was lost in the Fall, was restored in Christ, the second Adam. This restoration as a new creation is to be understood

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[240] III.21.10, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 23.3, 23.5. Cf. also the summary of the doctrine of recapitulation in Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 32–4.
[241] Cf. Gen. 1.26.

as meaning that humanity is given "the opportunity of making a new start in Christ", as Kelly puts it.[242] And that is exactly the point of the Akathistos. The hymn begins with the reference to the Fall by stating that the curse shall cease (1.7). The 'fallen Adam' is recalled (1.8), the second Adam is born from the virgin earth (13.1–3), and the salvation of humans is inseparably connected with the 'new creation': "Seeing this strange birth . . . the High One appeared on earth as a humble man, wishing to draw to the heights those who cry to him" (14.1–5). On the other hand, the goal of one living in virginity is to become 'a new creation', to become like Christ, transformed by the renewal of the mind, by obeying the heavenly calling and following Christ.[243]

Turning to Mary, we notice that the Irenaean 'virgin earth' ("from a seedless womb", 13.3) has been strengthened by the assertion "preserving it chaste as it was before" (13.4), which betrays the idea of Mary's virginity *post partum*. Because Proclus uses the *post partum* argument in favour of the Theotokos,[244] it can be taken as an indication of the Ephesian timeframe. Strophe 13 emphasizes the miracle of the virgin birth (13.5), which constitutes a testimony to the divinity of Christ. Thus Mary is pictured as the Virgin who gives birth to God.

Some reflections of Irenaeus's ideas are found in the Marian epithets. Firstly, Irenaeus describes the Incarnation as redemption from the slavery of sin, and so too does the Akathistos, as strophe 22 in particular shows. Here we have the salutation "Hail, you who brought into the world the deliverer of captives" (13.12).[245] Second, according to Irenaeus's theory, through Christ's obedience mortals obtain the imperish-

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[242] Kelly (1989), 173.

[243] Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate* XXIII.7.13–48.

[244] Cf. the formulations of Proclus, p. 82; see also the analysis of 17.14, pp. 156–8.

[245] Lampe (1961): "λυτρωτής, *a deliverer, a redeemer*", cf. λυτρόω and λύτρωσις. Hesychius in his homily "On Hypapante" describes the Incarnation as liberation, deliverance of captives and remission of debts, Hom. 6, *PG* 93.1473A = Aubineau (1978), 1.6.3–4; *PG* 93.1473A: ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἀφέσεως· ἀπήντησε τῶν αἰχμαλώτων ἡ λύτρωσις, τῶν χρεῶν ἡ συγχώρησις. "For the time of remission came, the deliverance of captives took place and the remission of debts." The parallel between τῶν αἰχμαλώτων ἡ λύτρωσις ("the deliverance of captives") and the Akathistos Hymn's λυτρωτὴν αἰχμαλώτοις ("deliverer of captives") is indicative of how strophe 13 is still concerned with the topic of the Hypapante strophe. The idea of remission for captives goes back to the prophecy of Isaiah 61.1 through Luke 4.16–21. Luke relates that in the synagogue of Nazareth when Jesus began his public work, after reading the prophecy of Isaiah, he said: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Probably 13.12 points to this, too.

ability and immortality which they lost in the Fall.[246] The Akathistos refers to immortality: "Hail, flower of incorruption" (13.6). It is plain that the word ἀφθαρσία ('incorruption') in the first place refers to incorruption, because the beginning of the strophe is focused on Mary's virginity, but in spite of this it certainly implies immortality, since it reflects the 'new creation', which implicitly involves the idea of immortality.[247] Third, the typical juxtaposition of Irenaeus between the tree of the cross and the tree of Paradise (e.g. "by his obedience on the tree recapitulating the disobedience in the tree")[248] is seen in the Akathistos. There too is the tree of Paradise: "Hail, tree of glorious fruit on which the faithful feed" (13.11), as the tree of the cross: "Hail, wood of fair shading leaves where many shelter" (13.12). Fourth, the salutation: "Hail you who shine forth the prefiguration of resurrection" (13.8) reflects Christ's epithet 'firstborn', that is, "the firstborn of the dead" (Colossians 1.18), which Irenaeus uses for the second Adam.[249] O'Carrol even notes that Irenaeus favoured the title 'firstborn of the Virgin'.[250]

The salutations, which point to the eschatological future, form a logical continuation of the Irenaean context: "Hail, conciliation of the Righteous Judge; hail, forgiveness for many who have stumbled; hail, robe of free intercession given to the naked" (13.13–16). Moreover it is quite clear that these epithets are justified by the sort of argument Irenaeus gives:

> As the first one [i.e. Eve] was seduced by the word of an angel to escape God and lie about his words, so the second was given the good news by the word of an angel to bear God and obey his word; and as the first was seduced into disobeying God, so the second was persuaded to obey God so that the virgin Mary might became the advocate of the virgin Eve; and just as the human race was subjected to death by a virgin, it was freed by a virgin, with the virginal disobedience balanced by virginal obedience.[251]

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[246] Cf. III.19.1, 20.2, 21.1, V.19.1.

[247] ἀφθαρσία is one of the basic concepts of asceticism. Consult Lampe (1961) on its ambiguous meaning: ἀφθαρσία, 'incorruption' (physical, moral and spiritual); 'immortality' (the two meanings cannot always be clearly distinguished).

[248] V.19.1.

[249] V.19.1: "Thus the sin of the first man (πρωτοπλάστος) was corrected by the rectitude of the Firstborn (πρωτοτόκος)."

[250] Cf. O'Carroll (1983), s.v. "Irenaeus".

[251] *Adversus Haereses* V. 19.1: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκείνη διὰ τοῦ ἀγγελικοῦ ῥήματος ἐξηπατήθη ἵνα ἐκφύγῃ τὸν Θεὸν παραβᾶσα τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, οὕτως καὶ αὕτη διὰ τοῦ ἀγγελικοῦ ῥήματος εὐαγγελίσθη ἵνα βαστάσῃ τὸν Θεὸν ὑπακούσασα αὐτοῦ τῷ λόγῳ· καὶ ὡς ἐκείνη

In the context of strophe 5 I discussed the epithet "freedom of approach for mortals before God" (5.17) against the pattern of thought which can be traced back to the Old Testament, and put forth the supposition that, "in the first place, Mary's obedience to the will of God was held as the reason which justifies her free approach to God, and not her birth-giving". The quotation from Irenaeus above proves that Mary's obedience is really the premise from which the eschatological epithets of Mary unfold. This premise explains how it is imaginable that Mary can even persuade (δυσώπησις) the Righteous Judge.[252] The word παρρησία in the στολὴ τῶν γυμνῶν παρρησίας ("robe of free intercession given to the naked", 13.16) needs no further explication. As to the origins of this metaphor, Meersseman's explanation of the "robe given to the naked" is illuminating. The robe (stola, στολή) refers to the practice according to which free men carried a robe in the law court, but slaves appeared naked (γυμνοί) as a sign that they had no right to speak. So, Mary serves as *stola* for human beings, who are the slaves of sin.[253]

There are five epithets which reflect strongly the ideas of asceticism (13.6–9, 13.17). The epithet, "you who conceived the guide to those who wander astray" (13.13) is a marginal case,[254] for it can be interpreted either in the ascetical framework or as a reference to the descendants of Adam and Eve. The spiritual meaning of the word ἀφθαρσία in the "flower of incorruption" (13.6) unfolds, like the whole epithet, in the first pages of Gregory of Nyssa's treatise *De Virginitate.* To summarize Gregory's teaching starkly: those who possess the virtue or grace of incorruption are brought into relationship with Christ. It is exactly in such a context that Mary appears as example.[255] The word ἐγκρατεία ("crown of continence", τὸ στέμμα τῆς ἐγκρατείας, 13.7) deserves a special notice, because it is the word which actually proves the projection of ascetical practice onto Mary.[256] The spiritual meaning of the "crown of

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ἐξηπατήθη εἰς τὸ παρακοῦσαι τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὕτως καὶ αὕτη ἐπείσθη ὑπακοῦσαι τῷ Θεῷ, ἵνα τῆς παρθένου Εὕας ἡ παρθένος Μαρία γένηται παράκλητος· καὶ ὡς συνεδέθη θανάτῳ τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων διὰ παρθένου, ἐλύθη διὰ παρθένου, ἀντιταλαντευθείσης τῆς παρθενικῆς παρακοῆς διὰ τῆς παρθενικῆς ὑπακοῆς.

[252] Cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. δυσωπέω and δυσώπησις.

[253] Meersseman (1958), 22–3.

[254] Cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. πλανάω, B.b.

[255] See Preface 1–2, chapter I, II.1–3, esp. on Mary II.2.18–22.

[256] Consult Lampe (1961). The word ἐγκρατεία is a central concept in ascetical thinking. Its basic meaning is 'temperance', 'continence', 'abstinence'. Clement of Alexandria considers it as the foundation of virtues and as weapon against sensuality. It is

continence" is to be perceived on the basis of the New Testament,[257] yet the context links it with the world of ascetical values. The salutations "Hail, you who shine forth the prefiguration of resurrection" (13.8) and "Hail, you who show forth the life of the angels" (13.8–9) appear together due to the history of the concept of 'angelic life' (ἀγγελικὸς βίος),[258] which was used as a synonym for the life of an ascetic.[259] The "prefiguration of resurrection" is an epithet of Christ, whereas the "life of the angels" can be ascribed to both Christ and Mary, depending on the point of departure. In the eschatological framework of the Incarnation it refers to Christ, whereas in the ascetical framework it is Mary herself who is regarded as a mirror of the angelic life because of her

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used in conjunction with other virtues and spiritual activities. A definition of Basil the Great is illuminating: *Regulae Fusius Tractatae* 1631.964AB: ἔστιν οὖν ἡ ἐγκρατεία ἁμαρτίας ἀναίρεσις, παθῶν ἀπαλλοτρίωσις, σώματος νέκρωσις μέχρι καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν φυσικῶν παθημάτων τε καὶ ἐπιθυμίων, ζωῆς πνευματικῆς ἀρχή, τῶν αἰωνίων ἀγαθῶν πρόξενος, ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὸ κέντρον τῆς ἡδονῆς ἀφανίζουσα. "Continence is the removal of sin, the estrangement from passions, the mortification of the body even as far as physical suffering and longing, the beginning of the spiritual life, the ambassador of eternal virtues, obliterating in itself the spur of pleasure." Gregory of Nyssa states, *De Virginitate* XXII.2.25–8: Οὗτος ὁ τελεώτατος τῆς ἐγκρατείας σκοπός, οὐχὶ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος βλέπειν κακοπάθειαν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν τῶν ψυχικῶν διακονημάτων εὐκολίαν. "That is temperance's highest aim; it looks not to the afflicting of the body, but to the peaceful action of the soul's function."

[257] E.g. Gal. 5.13–21, Eph. 5.3–5, Col. 3.5–10.

[258] Cf. Frank (1964), esp. 1–11, 198–9.

[259] Gregory explains why the life of an ascetic is comparable with the life of the angels, *De Virginitate* XIV.4.13–20: Εἶτα τὸ ἐξαίρετον τῶν ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει καλῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι καρποῦται βίῳ· εἰ γὰρ ἰσάγγελος ἡ ζωή, ἣ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου τοῖς δικαίοις ἀπήγγελται, τῆς δὲ ἀγγελικῆς φύσεως ἴδιον τὸ ἀπηλλάχθαι τοῦ γάμου ἐστίν, ἤδη δέδεκται τὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας καλὰ "ταῖς λαμπρότησι τῶν ἁγίων" ἀναμιγνύμενος καὶ τῷ ἀμολύντῳ τῆς ζωῆς τὴν καθαρότητα τῶν ἀσωμάτων μιμούμενος. "(An ascetic) enjoys even in this present life a certain exquisite glory of all the blessed results of our resurrection. For our Lord has announced that the life after our resurrection shall be as that of the angels (Mark 12.25). Now the peculiarity of the angelic nature is that they are strangers to marriage; therefore the blessings of this promise have been already received by him who has not only mingled his own glory with the halo of the Saints, but also by the stainlessness of his life has so imitated the purity of these incorporeal beings." However, in the first place, the ἀγγελικὸς βίος is concerned with the imitation of Christ, e.g. *De Virginitate* XXIII.7.44–8: Ἐκ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ συσταυρωθῆναι, καὶ συζῆσαι καὶ συνδοξασθῆναι (Rom. 8.17) καὶ συμβασιλεῦσαι προσγίνεται· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ἑαυτὸν παραστῆσαι τῷ Θεῷ, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως καὶ ἀξίας εἰς τὴν ἀγγελικήν ἐστι μετατάξασθαι. "And the consequence of being crucified with Christ is that we shall live with him, and be glorified with him, and reign with him; and the consequence of presenting ourselves to God is that we shall be changed from the rank of human nature and human dignity to that of Angels."

incorruption and continence (ἀφθαρσία and ἐγκρατεία), as the context of the strophe suggests.

The last epithet, "love conquering all desire" (13.17), is the most 'informal' of all attributions to Mary in the whole hymn. This epithet needs longer discussion than is possible here, but I shall still try to make clear my point. Besides love, the word στοργή means 'affection', like the natural affection of parents and children.[260] Addison maintains that 'love' refers to Christ,[261] but the addressee is Mary, undeniably. So, Mary is called love or affection. According to the lexicon the basic meaning of the word πόθος is a 'longing, yearning, fond desire or regret for something absent or lost'.[262] Because the word νικῶσα implies a victory e.g. in war, the epithet could be paraphrased in the following way: the spiritual war, which a soul continuously carries on against desire, is conquered by Mary's affection. A rough way to express the same idea would be: Mary 'takes care' of the souls troubled by their desires. The word στοργή refers to the relation between Mary and those in trouble. Since it implicitly denotes the relation between children and their mother, I understand that here Mary is presented as the mother of Christians, the 'mother' in the proper sense of the word. If the conclusion is right, it is significant, for the 'real' mother appears only once in the whole hymn, since the most formal exclamation in the beginning of strophe 24, "O, Mother hymned by all" cannot be taken into consideration.

A summary of the conceptual elements of strophe 13 shows that the concept of Second Eve is quantitatively dominant (8/14 attributions: 13.8, 13.10–16). Because of the strong emphasis on chastity (13.3–4, 13.6–7), in reality the concept of Virgin becomes more dominant. The expression "preserving it chaste as it was before" refers to the divine aspect of the Theotokos. Five epithets (13.6–9, 13.17) reflect the world of ascetical ideas, one of them representing the 'mother' (13.17).

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[260] Cf. Liddell and Scott (1968), and Lampe (1961). *De Virginitate* VI.1.30: οὔτε εἰς τέκνων στοργὴν οὔτε εἰς γυναικῶν φροντίδα οὔτε εἰς ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀπασχολήσαντες. "Having no leisure either for love of children or for care for women or for anything else human."

[261] Addison (1983), 45: "Christ, who is the 'fruit', surpasses all 'desire', with reference to the desirability of the fruit in the Garden of Eden."

[262] Liddell and Scott (1968); cf. Lampe (1961).

Strophe 14

Strophe 14 is linked with the 'new creation', to which the 'strange birth' refers. In spite of this conjunction, strophe 14 does not develop the theme of the recreation. Instead it gives an explanation for the Incarnation: "To this end the High One appeared on earth as a humble man, wishing to draw to the heights those who cry to him: 'Alleluia.'" (13.3–5). Exactly the same idea is found in the homily "On Hypapante" of Hesychius of Jerusalem:

> I see the Lord . . . clad in the shape of the servant. Being the Lord, he would not have carried the form of a servant, if he had not planned to clothe the servant in the form of the Lord. . . . Being the High One, he would not have changed the order to its opposite, not humbled himself, if he had not wished to lead the humble up to Heaven.[263]

As noted, the Hypapante strophe is the introduction to the appearance of God the Logos. Therefore the parallel of the homily of Hesychius reminds us that strophes 13, 14, 15 and 16, which describe the parousia, belong conceptually together. The summary of the epithets of Christ, included in these four strophes, will be given in strophe 16.

Strophe 15

The nature of the Logos and the manner of the Incarnation (15.1–5) was discussed in the light of the Nestorian controversy in the section "Christology". In the section "Homily 39 of 'Basil of Seleucia'" I presented the view that the famous parallel with 15.1–4 in Basil's homily is a citation from the Akathistos.[264] The theme of 15.1–5 of the Akathistos is by no

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[263] Hom. 6, *PG* 93.1473B = Aubineau (1978), 1.6.7–12; *PG* 93.1473B: Ὁρῶ τὸν δεσπότην . . . σχῆμα δούλου περικείμενον. Οὐκ ἂν δεσπότης ἂν δούλου μορφὴν ἐφόρεσεν, εἰ μὴ τὸν δοῦλον ἐνδύσαι τοῦ δεσπότου τὴν μορφὴν ἐλογίσατο. Οὐκ ἀν τὴν τάξιν ἐνήλλαξεν, οὐδ' ὑψηλὸς ἂν ἐταπεινώθη, εἰ μὴ τὸ ταπεινὸν εἰς ὕψος ἀναγαγεῖν ἠβουλήθη.

[264] *PG* 85.448B: Ὅλος τοῖς κάτω ἐπέστης, καὶ οὐδ' ὅλως ἄνω ἀπέστης· οὐ γὰρ τοπικὴ γέγονεν ἡ κατάβασις, ἀλλὰ θεῖκὴ πέπρακται συγκατάβασις. "You resided wholly among those below, yet were wholly not absent from those above; for the descent did not take place according to place, but a divine condescension was carried out." Ak. 15.1–4: Ὅλος ἦν ἐν τοῖς κάτω καὶ τῶν ἄνω οὐδ' ὅλως ἀπῆν ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος συγκατάβασις γὰρ θεϊκή, οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικὴ γέγονε. "The uncircumscribed Word was present wholly among those below, yet in no way absent from those above. For a divine condescension occurred, not a descent according to place."

means exhausted by these considerations, but because the main subject of the study is the image of Mary, I have to focus on it. To begin with the expression "birth from the Virgin" (τόκος ἐκ παρθένου, 15.5): it is not identical with the formulation of the creed, "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary",[265] but the idea is the same, i.e. that God was born from the Virgin. The order is indicative of doctrinal considerations, for, as I see it such an interpretation, that the Virgin gave birth to God as in Romanos's hymn "On the Nativity" ("The Virgin today gives birth to the one who is above being"),[266] would have been inappropriate and impossible for an orthodox hymn which was created relatively close to the Council of Ephesus. The word θεόληπτος ('seized by God', 15.5) implying the plan of God,[267] refers to the concept Second Eve.

The appearance of the epithet "the container of the uncontainable God" (Θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου χώρα, 15.6) in the homilies of the Ephesian period has been discussed in other connections, and by now it is clear that I consider the paradox χώρα ἀχωρήτου as an argument for the term 'Theotokos' in the Nestorian controversy. Scholars may occasionally connect the emergence of the 'container' with that controversy,[268] but no satisfying explanation for the concept χώρα ἀχωρήτου has yet been presented. It is plain that it contradicts the teaching of Antiochian theologians, to whom it was an absurdity to maintain that God in his nature would be circumscribed in being human. But it seems to be that when the epithet was used by the Theotokos defenders, the emphasis was laid on the mystery or miracle involved in the Incarnation.[269] Apart from this, on the basis of Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa

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265 σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγιοῦ καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου. In the exposition of the 150 Fathers, i.e., the Second Council of Constantinople of 381. Tanner (1990), 24.

266 Maas and Trypanis (1963), no. 1: ἡ παρθένος σήμερον τὸν ὑπερούσιον τίκτει.

267 Cf. Lampe (1961), s.v. θεόληπτος.

268 Cf. Constas 1995, 169–94: 179–80. Briere (1985), 22.

269 E.g. Proclus: "Who ever saw, who ever heard of God in his infinity dwelling in a womb?" *ACO* I.1.1.103.22–3; 'Basil of Seleucia', Hom. 39, *PG* 85.445A: Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ τοιαύτη δύναμις ἐπισκιασῇ σοι, οὐ δυνήσῃ χωρεῖν τὸν ἀχώρητον. "For if such power [of the Highest] did not overshadow you, you would not be able to contain the uncontainable." Ibid. 445AB: Πῶς ἡ ἄκτιστος καὶ ἀχώρητος οὐσία τοῦ Λόγου καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀκοινώνητος κτίσιν, ᾗ προσβλέψαι τὰ Χερουβὶν οὐ τολμᾷ, κἂν τῶν λοιπῶν ὑπερέχεται ταγμάτων, αὕτη κοινωνίαν ἠσπάσατο πρὸς τὴν ἀσθενῆ καὶ γεώδη τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος φύσιν; Καὶ γέγονε μυστήριον, ὅπερ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον μένει μυστήριον, καὶ οὐδεποτε παύσεται τοῦ εἶναι μυστήριον. "How did the uncreated and uncontained essence of the Word, not partaking in any created matter and at which the Cherubim dare not glance, even though they excel the other orders, afford him a partaking in the

we might pose the question whether it denotes an intellectual or spiritual dimension.[270] Be the historical development as it may, in the Akathistos the Θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου χώρα is exclusively the 'place' of God, whereas the θύρα in the epithet "gate of hallowed mystery" (15.6) is the 'place', where human beings can gain contact with the divine. The 'mystery' as a reference to the Incarnation can be articulated in different ways.[271] The epithet is approachable from two opposite viewpoints. Viewed from the Incarnation, the 'gate' serves as the opportunity for the plan of God. And from the standpoint of human beings, the 'gate' serves as a means of access to the mystery, that is, the participation of human beings in salvation. This means that the 'gate' refers to the concept of Second Eve.

On account of the context in which the salutations "Hail, tidings doubted by unbelievers" (15.8) and "Hail, undoubted boast of believers" (15.9) appear, it is justified to connect them with the Theotokos controversy.[272] For the succeeding epithets, the "all-holy chariot of him who is above the Cherubim" (15.10) and the "excellent dwelling-place for him who is above the Seraphim" (15.11) prove incontestably Mary's high position as the *Theo*tokos, the bearer of God. While the epithet ἀχώρητος relates to early Christian philosophical speculations, the formulation 'above the Cherubim/Seraphim' is associated with the Old Testament. Only against the famous vision of Ezekiel, in which the wheel-work of

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weak and earthly nature of humanity? A mystery took place, which remains a mystery to this day, and will never cease to be a mystery."

[270] E.g. *Adversus Haereses* IV.33.4: πῶς ἄνθρωπος χωρήσει εἰς Θεόν, εἰ μὴ ὁ Θεὸς ἐχώρησεν εἰς ἄνθρωπον; "How could man receive God, had not God been received into man?", or, "How could man receive God, if God had not been contained in man?"; *Adversus Haereses* III.20.2: ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ σκηνώσας ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ Υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου γενόμενος, ἵνα ἐθίσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπον χωρεῖν Θεόν, ἐθίσῃ δὲ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν σκηνοῦν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Πατρός. "This Word of God which dwelt in man was made Son of man to accustom man to perceive God and to accustom God to dwell in man, according to the good pleasure of the Father." *De Virginitate* XXIII.7.36–9: Εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἐπιφανῆναι σοι ποθεῖς, τί οὐκ ἀκούεις τοῦ Μωυσέως καθαρεύειν ἀπὸ γάμου τῷ λαῷ παραγγέλλοντος, ἵνα χωρήσωσι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐμφάνειαν; "If you long for God to manifest himself to you, why do you not hear Moses, when he commands the people to be pure from the stains of marriage, that they may take in the vision of God?"

[271] E.g. Proclus, Hom. 2, *PG* 65.700D; translation Constas (1994), 133/154: ἐν τῷ μυστηρίῳ ὁ Θεὸς "μορφὴν δούλου ἔλαβεν". "In the mystery [of the Incarnation] God accepted 'the form of a servant'"; Hom. 3, *PG* 65.708A; Constas (1994), 165/174: τὸ δὲ μυστήριον τῆς θεῖας οἰκονομίας ἐβάστασε παρθένου γαστήρ. "The womb of a virgin contained the mystery of the divine dispensation."

[272] Addison (1983), 47, does not say this explicitly even though he links the passage with the Nestorians: "Her Divine Motherhood is always something that disturbs unbelievers, particularly the Nestorians of the 5th century."

the Cherubim is described,[273] does the attribution of the "all-holy chariot of him who is above the Cherubim" to Mary unfold in all its significance. The "excellent dwelling-place for him who is above the Seraphim" seems to be an original creation of the hymnographer, modelled after the 'chariot' of the Cherubim. There is no doubt that epithets 15.10–11 present the concept of Theotokos. In this connection it is good to remember that Homily 39, ascribed to Basil of Seleucia, as an encomium to the Theotokos begins with the explicit statement that the praise of the Theotokos "takes its origin from above the heavenly powers, from the light that God's *doxa* shines round about".

The concept of Theotokos would be found in the salutation "Hail, you who bring opposites together" (15.12), if it were considered as a statement of the divine and human nature of Christ. However, in the light of the succeeding epithet, "you who unite of virginity and childbirth" (15.13) it is clear that the 'same' concerns the Virgin herself, the Virgin who has power to give birth, i.e. the concept of Virgin. The four remaining salutations are directed to Mary as the Second Eve. They neither refer to the nature of Christ nor to the paradox of the virgin birth, but ultimately to the reason for the Incarnation, the Fall and the plan of God for the salvation of humankind: "Hail, through whom sin is remitted" (15.14), "Hail, through whom Paradise is opened" (15.15), "Hail, key to the kingdom of Christ" (15.16), and "Hail, hope of eternal blessings" (15.17).[274]

A summary of the conceptual image of Mary demonstrates that the issue of the Theotokos characterizes strophe 15 (epithets 15.8–9 explicitly), and it is the concept of Theotokos whose significance is emphasized. The concept of Theotokos is unambiguous only in three cases: 15.6 ("container of the uncontainable God") and 15.11–12 ("all-holy chariot of him who is above the Cherubim", "excellent dwelling-place for him who is above the Seraphim"), for in the epithet 15.6 ("gate of hallowed mystery") there are the elements of both the concepts of Theotokos and the Second Eve. Otherwise the Second Eve appears altogether six times

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[273] Ezek. 1, 10.9–18.

[274] Also in conformity with Gregory's teaching, *De Virginitate* XIV.4.3–6: καὶ ἔοικεν εἰκών τις εἶναι τῆς "ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι" μακαριότητος ὁ ἐν παρθενίᾳ βίος, πολλὰ φέρων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τῶν δι' ἐλπίδος ἀποκειμένων (Col. 1.5) ἀγαθῶν τὰ γνωρίσματα. "In fact, the Life of Virginity seems to be an actual representation of the blessedness in the world to come, showing as it does in itself so many signs of the presence of those expected blessings which are reserved for us there."

(15.5, 15.7, 15.14–17). The Virgin is related to the birth of the Logos ("birth from the Virgin"), and the paradox involved in the virgin birth is shown twice (15.11–12).

Strophe 16

Strophe 16 finishes the section concerning the appearance of God the Logos, which began with the Hypapante. Now the sense of the 'great work' of the Incarnation is revealed in its entirety to the angelic world: through the approachable human being who lives among "us" access to God is given (16.1–5). That the angels are presented as bearing witness to the Incarnation is a reflection of the early Christian way of thinking and might even be involved in doctrinal considerations.[275] Once the conception of angels as beings that somehow stood lower than God but higher than human beings was a commonplace,[276] the angels were in the position to see the whole event and its meaning.

At this stage it is appropriate to present the attributes of the incarnate God by which the parousia has been described in strophes 13–16: "new creation" (13.1), "the High One appeared on earth as a humble man" (14.3–4), "the uncircumscribed Word was present wholly among those below, yet in no way absent from those above" (15.1–2), "God whom none can approach as a human approachable by all, dwelling among us" (16.3–5). This collection demonstrates that antithesis is the main device for expressing both the idea and the manner of the Incarnation as well as the nature of Christ. In them there appears nothing which we could not find in the New Testament or in the writings of the generations of authors who preceded Proclus and his contemporaries.

Strophe 17

In strophe 17 the mystery of the Theotokos is described by pointing to the orators, who are unable to explain the virgin birth. It is noteworthy that the issue does not revolve around how a virgin has the power to

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[275] Pelikan (1971), 132: "For the history or Christian doctrine, the understanding of the supernatural order evident in the faith and life of the first two or three Christian centuries is an essential element in the development of the teaching of the Church."

[276] Pelikan (1971), 133.

bear a child, but how a virgin, despite the birth-giving, remains a virgin (17.4). This is exactly what Proclus considers as the proof of the birth of God from the Virgin in his homily against Nestorius and in the letter to the Church of Armenia.[277] Thus it is reasonable to conclude that strophe 17 argues for the title 'Theotokos' by means of the concept 'virginity *post partum*'. Anyhow, it is clear that in the Akathistos the mystery itself is a proof of the divine plan, in which Mary is the instrument God chose: "Hail, vessel of the wisdom of God" (17.6) and "Hail, treasure of his providence" (17.7). Because the subject matter is chastity, these epithets represent the concept of Virgin. Since they imply at the same time the plan of God, they overlap with the concept of Second Eve.

Trypanis makes some few remarks on the epithets 17.10 and 17.12. Refuting the hypothesis that the salutation "Hail, you who have torn asunder the tangled webs of the Athenians" (17.12) refers to the closing of the philosophic school of Athens by Justinian in 529, he brings forward the idea, presented by T. P. Themeles and G. G. Meersseman, that this epithet "is nothing more than a reference to Acts 17, 16 f. and the speech of St. Paul to the Athenians".[278] I am not able to see any influence of Acts on epithet 17.12, not even in the larger passage of 17.8–12. Instead I admit that 1 Corinthians 1.19–20 might be reflected in "Hail, since the cunning disputants are shown to be fools" (17.10).[279] And I think that the salutation "Hail, you who have filled the nets of the fishermen" (17.13) reflects the Gospel: the words of Jesus, quoted by Matthew 4.18–20, and the haul, told in the Gospel of John 21.

All in all, the passage 17.8–13 in the context of the issue of the virgin birth probably refers to the debate on the significance of Mary's virginity in Christological discourse. But this does not exclude the fact that in ascetic spirituality, in which philosophy was shown as inferior to the real

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[277] Hom. 1, *ACO* I.1.104.3–4: εἰ μὴ παρθένος ἔμεινεν ἡ μήτηρ, ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος ὁ τεχθεὶς καὶ οὐ παράδοξος ὁ τόκος. "If the mother had not remained a virgin, the child born would have been a mere man and the birth no miracle." *Tomus*, *ACO* IV.2.192.23–4: καὶ φυλάξαι τὴν τεκοῦσαν παρθένον μαρτυρόμενος ὅτι ἐστὶ Θεός. "And to preserve the birth-giver as a virgin, testifying that he is God."

[278] Trypanis (1968), 22–3.

[279] Trypanis (1968), 23 n. 47. 1 Cor. 1.19–20: ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω. ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεύς; ποῦ συζητητὴς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου; οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

philosophy, i.e. theology, the expressions which emphasize the 'real knowledge' would always be apt: "Hail, you who reveal lovers of wisdom as unwise" (17.8); "Hail, you who refute practitioners of reason as unreasonable" (17.9); "Hail, you who draw us forth from the depths of ignorance" (17.14); "Hail, you who illuminate many with knowledge" (17.15).[280] Against such a background even the "tangled webs of the Athenians" sounds convincing, since a great number of the converts to Christianity were educated in Greek rhetoric precisely in Athens. And when we read what Gregory of Nyssa, the most famous "philosophical theologian",[281] writes in *De Vita Moysis*, the connection with ascetical reasoning becomes more evident and we can understand why those polemical expressions are attributed to Mary:

> For truly barren is profane education, which is always in labour but never gives birth. For what fruit worthy of such pangs does philosophy show for being so long in labour? Do not all who are full of wind and never come to term miscarry before they come to the light of the knowledge of God, although they could as well become people if they were not altogether hidden in the womb of barren wisdom?[282]

Accordingly I see the whole passage 17.8–15 as a reflection of the juxtaposition of the pagan and Christian spiritual values. There it has been taken for granted that Mary is the paragon of the virtue of chastity, an aspect which the concept of Virgin embraces.

Addison interprets the epithet "ship for those who wish to be saved" (17.16) as an allusion to the Ark of Noah (Gen. 6.14 ff.), but because the word for the ark systematically used in Genesis is κιβωτός, I believe that the 'ship' (ὁλκάς) in the first place proves the popularity of seafaring rhetoric.[283] The last epithet "haven for the seafarers of life" (17.17) belongs to the same category of rhetorical conventions, which is natur-

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[280] Consult Lampe (1961) for the many meanings of γνώσις.

[281] Gregory of Nyssa (trans. Malherbe and Ferguson, 1978), 3. Gregory calls philosophy medicine of the souls: τῆς τῶν ψυχῶν ἰατρικῆς, τῆς φιλοσοφίας λέγω "I speak of medicine of souls, of philosophy" (*De Virginitate* XXIII.2.27–8).

[282] *De Vita Moysis* II.11: Ἄγονος γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡ ἔξωθεν παίδευσις ἀεὶ ὠδίνουσα καὶ μηδέποτε ζωογονοῦσα τῷ τόκῳ. Τίνα γὰρ ἔδειξε καρπὸν τῶν μακρῶν ὠδίνων ἡ φιλοσοφία, τῶν τοσούτων τε καὶ τοιούτων ἄξιον πόνων; Οὐ πάντες ὑπηνέμιοί τε καὶ ἀτελεσφόρητοι, πρὶν εἰς τὸ φῶς ἐλθεῖν τῆς θεογνωσίας, ἀμβλίσκονται, δυνάμενοι ἴσως γενέσθαι ἄνθρωποι, εἰ μὴ διόλου τοῖς κόλποις τῆς ἀγόνου σοφίας ἐνεκαλυπτοντο;

[283] E.g. Proclus, Hom.1, *ACO* I.1.103.7–8: ἰδοὺ γὰρ γῆ καὶ θάλαττα δορυφορεῖ τῇ παρθένῳ, ἣ μὲν τὰ νῶτα ταῖς ὁλκάσιν γαληνῶς ὑφαπλώσασα. "Behold, the earth and sea attend the Virgin, who has spread out the expanses tranquilly for the ships."

ally met with also in ascetical writings.[284] Basically the 'ship' and the 'haven' correspond to the 'place' or the 'container' of the concept Theotokos, but because they do not reflect the nature of Christ, but salvation, they represent the concept Second Eve.

Thus, we find in strophe 17 the concept Virgin (17.4) as an argument for the title 'Theotokos', and we find the concept Virgin (17.8–15) as reflecting spiritual standards, which are to be traced back to the ascetical framework of the hymn. The concept Second Eve appears in four epithets (17.6–7, 17.16–17), overlapping with the Virgin in two cases (17.6–7). The concept Virgin characterizes strophe 17.

Strophe 18

Strophe 18 is concerned with salvation, deification and imitation. It begins with the affirmation that the Incarnation occurred for the salvation of the world ("Wishing to save the world, the Maker of all things came to it of his own free choice", 18.1-2).[285] God is presented as κοσμήτωρ.[286] Then the same idea is expressed from another point of departure; God is now presented as shepherd (18.3),[287] who for our sake appeared as a human like us (18.4).[288] And finally emphasis is laid on the explication: God calls human beings through likeness ("calling like by means of like", 18.5). This passage (18.4–5) discloses the interweaving ideas of deification and imitation. Deification means essentially that "God made himself human, that we might be made divine", as Athan-

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[284] For example the last chapter of *De Virginitate* includes a long passage with seafaring imagery (XXIII.6–7.10).

[285] The word αὐτεπάγγελτος is ambiguous; cf. Fantini (1961). The translation "of his own free choice" requires an explanation: the verb ἐπαγγέλλω means among other things 'to give orders, command'. So the idea 'give an order to himself' or 'command himself' corresponds to the expression "of his own free choice".

[286] The idea involved in the Greek words of κόσμος and κοσμήτωρ does not translate into English; κόσμος, 'order'; the 'world' or 'universe', from its perfect arrangement; κοσμήτωρ, a 'commander', from κοσμέω, 'to order, arrange' (Liddell and Scott 1968). Because the word κοσμήτωρ implies a proper, desired order or arrangement, it is also closely related to a plan.

[287] Christ is the shepherd who came to search the lost sheep, cf. Matt. 18.12; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* V.12.3: ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἀπολωλὸς πρόβατον ἦλθειν ὁ Κύριος ἀναζητῶν. "But the Lord came to look for that very sheep that was lost." The 'shepherd' indicates also implicitly that Christ is the chief priest of the Church, e.g. Heb. 5.10, Eph. 2 and 4.

[288] Probably the reason for the economy of salvation, i.e. δι' ἡμᾶς ("for our sake"), is from the Nicene creed, cf. *ACO* II.1.2.127.

asius of Alexandria's famous formulation reads.[289] The imitation of Christ is involved with the thought of the renewal of the state of being "in the image and likeness of God" (Gen. 1.16).

When I wrote in the chapter "Christology" that the idea expressed in 18.4–5 is characteristic of the Christology of Athanasius of Alexandria, I only wanted to point to the link between the Akathistos and Alexandrian theology. But here I want to emphasize that the idea of deification appears for the first time in Irenaeus, and then it is found in the writings of Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa.[290] As to imitation ("calling like by means of like"), Pelikan states that "Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation can be read as the most profound theological vindication in the second and third centuries of the universal Christian ideal of the imitation of Christ".[291] It is plain that in the Akathistos the ideas of recapitulation, deification and imitation are intertwined, and therefore it is impossible to distinguish them from each other, but all of them can be traced back to Irenaeus. Yet I consider it certain that here ascetical teaching exercised the strongest influence. The name which in this context presents itself is Gregory of Nyssa, who explicitly claims that imitation is a way to salvation. However, on the basis of one single Akathistos verse no definite conclusion of the source can be made. Notwithstanding, for comparison I quote a typical passage of *De Virginitate*:

> Perhaps these examples have led us gradually on to the discovery that we can be changed into something better than ourselves; and it has been proved as well that this union of the soul with the incorruptible Deity can be accomplished in no other way but by herself attaining by her virgin state to the utmost purity possible—a state which, being like God, will enable her to grasp that which it is like (διὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου καταλάβοι τὸ ὅμοιον), while she places herself like a mirror beneath the purity of God, and moulds her own beauty at the touch and the sight of the Archetype of all beauty.[292]

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[289] Athanasius (ed. Kannengiesser), *SC* 199, 54.3: Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν.

[290] Lossky (1985), 97. The preface of Irenaeus's fifth and last book in the *Adversus Haereses* is finished with the idea of deification: τῷ Λόγῳ Θεοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, τῷ διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν αὐτοῦ ἀγάπην γεγονότι τοῦτο ὅπερ ἐσμὲν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα ἡμᾶς εἶναι καταρτίσῃ ἐκεῖνο ὅπερ ἐστὶν αὐτός. "The Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who because of his immeasurable love became what we are in order to make us what he is."

[291] Pelikan (1971), 145.

[292] *De Virginitate* XI.5.1–9: Τάχα τοίνυν ἡμᾶς ἠρέμα διὰ τῶν ὑποδειγμάτων ὁ λόγος προσήγαγε τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ τῆς πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἡμῶν ἀλλοιώσεως, καὶ ἐδείχθη μὴ δυνατὸν

Considering the theological significance of strophe 18, the main thing is, however, that salvation is presented as deification, involving the idea of imitation. Conceptually there is nothing which had not been presented before the fifth century, for the 'shepherd' refers to the most ancient conceptions of salvation.[293]

ἑτέρως εἶναι συναφθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ Θεῷ, μὴ καὶ αὐτὴν ὡς οἷόν τε καθαρὰν γενομένην διὰ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας, ὡς ἂν διὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου καταλάβοι τὸ ὅμοιον, οἱονεὶ κάτοπτρον τῇ καθαρότητι τοῦ θεοῦ ἑαυτὴν ὑποθεῖσα, ὥστε κατὰ μετοχὴν καὶ ἐμφάνειαν τοῦ πρωτοτύπου κάλλους καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ μορφωθῆναι. Jaeger (1954), 74, presents the view that it is typical of Gregory to think that only a purified soul can become a mirror of God, "according to the principle ὅμοιον ὁμοίῳ γινώσκεται". In the contemplative life of an ascetic imitation is the way to salvation, i.e. the *gnosis* of God. See the first chapter of *De Instituto Christiano* (ed. Jaeger), in *Gregori Nysseni Opera Ascetica* (1963), 40–1. Gregory's teaching is quite apparent also in *De Virginitate* , e.g. IV.9.5–8: οὕτω μοι δοκεῖ καὶ τὸ τῆς παρθενίας ἐπιτήδευμα· τέχνη τις εἶναι καὶ δύναμις τῆς θειοτέρας ζωῆς πρὸς τὴν ἀσώματον φύσιν τοὺς ἐν σαρκὶ ζῶντας ὁμοιοῦσθαι διδάσκουσα. "So I take it, virginity is the practical method in the science of the divine life, furnishing men with the power of assimilating themselves to spiritual natures." XI.4.1–10: Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἄν τις τῶν ὑψηλῶν ἐφίκοιτο περὶ τὰ ταπεινὰ τὴν σπουδὴν ἔχων; Πῶς δ' ἄν τις πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπταίη μὴ πτερωθεὶς τῷ οὐρανίῳ πτερῷ καὶ ἀνωφερὴς καὶ μετέωρος διὰ τῆς ὑψηλῆς πολιτείας γενόμενος; Τίς οὕτως ἔξω τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν μυστηρίων ἐστίν, ὡς ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἓν ὄχημα τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ ψυχῇ τῆς ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς πορείας ἐστί, τὸ τῷ εἴδει τῆς καταπτάσης περιστερᾶς ἑαυτὸν ὁμοιῶσαι, ἧς τὰς πτέρυγας γενέσθαι αὐτῷ καὶ Δαβὶδ ὁ προφήτης ἐπόθησεν; Οὕτω γὰρ ἐν αἰνίγματι τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος δύναμιν τῇ γραφῇ συνήθες ὀνομάζειν. "But how can any one reach to this, whose ambitions creep below? How can anyone fly up into the heavens, who has not the wings of heaven and is not already buoyant and lofty-minded by reason of a heavenly calling? Few can be such strangers to evangelic mysteries as not to know that there is but one vehicle on which man's soul can mount into the heavens, viz. the self-made likeness in himself to the descending Dove, whose wings David the Prophet also longed for. This is the allegorical name used in Scripture for the power of the Holy Spirit."

[293] E.g. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* (ed. Marrou and Harl, 1960), I.IX.84.1–3: Ἐξὸν δέ, εἰ βούλεσθε, τοῦ παναγίου ποιμένος καὶ παιδαγωγοῦ, τοῦ παντοκράτορος καὶ πατρικοῦ λόγου, τὴν ἄκραν σοφίαν καταμανθάνειν ἡμῖν, ἔνθα ἀλληγορεῖ, ποιμένα ἑαυτὸν προβάτων λέγων· ἔστι δὲ παιδαγωγὸς νυπίων. Φησὶν γοῦν διὰ Ἰεζεκιὴλ πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἀποταθεὶς καὶ τινα αὐτοῖς σωτήριον παρατιθεμένος ἐλόγου φροντίδος ὑπογραμμόν· "καὶ τὸ χωλὸν καταδήσω καὶ τὸ ὀχλούμενον ῥάσομαι καὶ τὸ πλανώμενον ἐπιστρέψω καὶ βοσκήσω αὐτοὺς ἐγὼ εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου." Ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἀγαθοῦ ποιμένος ἐπαγγέλματα· βόσκησον ἡμᾶς τοῦ νηπίους ὡς πρόβατα. Ναί, δέσποτα, τῆς σῆς πλήρωσον νομῆς, τῆς δικαισύνης· ναί, παιδαγωγέ, ποίμανον ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ ἅγιον σου ὄρος, πρὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, τὴν ὑψομένην, τὴν ὑπερνεφῆ, τὴν ἁπτομένην οὐρανῶν. "καὶ ἔσομαι" φησίν "αὐτῶν ποιμὴν καὶ ἔσομαι ἐγγὺς αὐτῶν." "To make it easy for us to understand the supreme wisdom, if you will, of the all-holy Shepherd and Guide, the almighty Word of the Father, he makes us a metaphor, calling himself the Shepherd of his sheep. He is truly the Educator of his children, who are little ones. In fact, through Ezekiel, He makes a long address to the rulers in which he presents a helpful description of his wise care: 'The lame I shall bring back, and I shall feed them on my holy mountain.' (Ezek. 34.16) This is the promise of him who is the Good Shepherd. Feed us, thy little ones, for we are

Strophe 19

Strophe 19 shows the ascetical background of the Akathistos more clearly than any other of the strophes; for instance virgins (παρθένοι) are mentioned explicitly twice (19.1, 19.16). The strophe begins by stating that Mary is a wall to virgins and all who need protection: "For virgins and for all who flee to you you are a wall, O Virgin Theotokos" (19.1–2). The wall epithet is to be traced back to Gregory's *De Virginitate*:

> But he [death] found in virginity a barrier, to pass which was an impossible feat. Just as in the age of Mary the bearer of God, he who had reigned from Adam to her time found, when he came to her and dashed his forces against the fruit of her virginity as against a rock, that he was shattered to pieces upon her, so in every soul which passes through this life in the flesh under the protection of virginity, the strength of death is in a manner broken and annulled, for he does not find the places upon which he may fix his sting.[294]

> It is perfectly clear, that no one can come near the purity of the Divine Being who has not first himself become such; he must therefore place between himself and the pleasures of the senses a high strong wall of separation, so that in this his approach to the Deity the purity of his own heart may not become soiled again. Such an impregnable wall will be found in a complete estrangement from everything wherein passion operates.[295]

Although Mary's virginity is an example and ideal to Gregory,[296] the other idea, referring to the cult, that Mary's virginity serves as a wall for

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thy sheep! Yes, Master, fill us with thy food, thy justice. Yes, O Educator, shepherd us to thy holy mountain, the Church, which is lifted up above the clouds, touching the heavens! 'And I shall be their shepherd', he says, 'and I will be near them.'"

[294] *De Virginitate* XIV.1.22–30: ὅρον τῆς ἐνεργείας ἑαυτοῦ τὴν παρθενίαν εὗρεν, ὃν παρελθεῖν τῶν ἀμηχάνων ἐστίν· ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς Θεοτόκου Μαρίας "ὁ βασιλεύσας ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ μέχρις" ἐκείνης "θάνατος", ἐπειδὴ καὶ κατ' αὐτὴν ἐγένετο, καθάπερ τινὶ πέτρᾳ τῷ καρπῷ τῆς παρθενίας προσπταίσας περὶ αὐτὴν συνετρίβη, οὕτως ἐν πάσῃ ψυχῇ τῇ διὰ παρθενίας τὴν ἐν σαρκὶ παριούσῃ ζωὴν συντρίβεται πως καὶ καταλύεται τοῦ θανάτου τὸ κράτος, οὐκ ἔχοντος τίσι τὸ ἑαυτοῦ κέντρον ἐναπερείσηται.

[295] *De Virginitate* XXI.1.1–7: Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τῇ καθαρότητι τοῦ Θεοῦ προσεγγίσαι, μὴ αὐτόν τινα πρότερον τοιοῦτον γενόμενον, ἀδύνατον κατεφάνη, ἀναγκαῖον ἂν εἴη μεγάλῳ τινὶ καὶ ἰσχυρῷ διατειχίσματι πρὸς τὰς ἡδονὰς ἑαυτὸν διαστῆσαι, ὡς ἂν μηδαμοῦ τῷ προσεγγισμῷ τούτῳ τὸ καθαρὸν τῆς καρδίας ἐπιμολύνοιτο· τεῖχος δέ ἐστιν ἀσφαλὲς ἡ τελεία πρὸς πᾶν τὸ ἐμπαθῶς ἐπιτελοῦμενον ἀλλοτρίωσις.

[296] *De Virginitate* II.2.15–21: ἣν ἄλλως οὐκ ἔστι πρὸς ἀκρίβειαν πᾶσαν κατορθωθῆναι, εἰ μὴ παντελῶς τις ἑαυτὸν τῶν τῆς σαρκὸς παθημάτων ἀλλοτριώσεν. Ὅπερ γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀμιάντῳ Μαρίᾳ γέγονε σωματικῶς "τοῦ πληρώματος τῆς θεότητος" ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ διὰ τῆς παρθενίας ἐκλάμψαντος, τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ πάσης ψυχῆς κατὰ λόγον παρθενεούσης γίνεται. "No one can secure this for himself, unless he has altogether estranged himself from the

people who need protection, is not found in his writing. On the level of the hymn's narration an explanation for the wall is given which refers to both an extraordinary constructor of the wall and the manner of construction ("For the Maker of heaven and earth constructed you, undefiled, by dwelling in your womb", 19.3–5).[297] The notion that God 'constructed' the undefiled (ἄχραντος) Virgin can be perceived as grace and a gift from God, as Gregory maintains virginity actually is.[298] Verses 19.1–15 are, however, so much more concise than the treatise of Gregory that it is impossible to know whether the Akathistos really follows *De Virginitate*. In any case the logic looks identical. Considering the entire hymn, Mary's role is more diversified than the part she has been given in *De Virginitate*, but the description of the Virgin is in conformity with Gregory's teaching. For instance, such a maxim as the first epithet displays, the "pillar of virginity" (19.6), could be from his pen.[299]

While the first epithet can be considered as a rhetorical figure, praising Mary's virginity, the second epithet, the "gate of salvation" (19.7) is one of the most important Old Testament types of Mary. The word πύλη ('gate') betrays its connection with Ezekiel's vision,[300] which in patristic tradition is interpreted as the testimony to the virgin birth of the Messiah. Gregory does not refer to Ezekiel, but for instance Hesychius and Proclus apply an allegory of the gate to Mary.[301] The rest of the salutations, 19.8–17, again give the impression that Gregory's work inspired the hymnographer, for the salutations deal with two themes

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passions of the flesh. What happened in the stainless Mary when the fullness of the Godhead which was in Christ shone through her, that happens in every soul that leads the virgin life according to the word."

[297] Lampe (1961): "κατασκευάζω, *make, construct, prepare*, a. of God in Creation, b. of Christ in Incarnation", e.g. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* 8.3.27–8: Αὐτὸς γὰρ δυνατὸς ἂν καὶ δημιουργὸς τῶν ὅλων, ἐν τῇ παρθένῳ κατασκευάζει ἑαυτῷ νάον τὸ σῶμα. "For because he is mighty and the Maker of all, he makes the temple of his body in the Virgin."

[298] Cf. *De Virginitate* I–II.

[299] Lampe (1961): "στήλη, *monument*, met., *memorial, record*, of deeds. etc."

[300] Ezek. 44.1–2: Καὶ ἐπέστρεψέν με κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς πύλης τῶν ἁγίων τῆς ἐξωτέρας τῆς βλεπούσης κατ' ἀνατολάς, καὶ αὕτη ἦν κεκλεισμένη. καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρός με Ἡ πύλη αὕτη κεκλεισμένη ἔσται, οὐκ ἀνοιχθήσεται, καὶ οὐδεὶς μὴ διέλθῃ δι' αὐτῆς, ὅτι κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ εἰσελεύσεται δι' αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔσται κεκλεισμένη. "Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. The Lord said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut."

[301] Cf. Hesychius, Hom. 5, *PG* 93.1464AB = Aubineau (1978), 5.2.19–31. Caro dates this homily to 428. Cf. Proclus, *ACO* I.1.1.107.18–25.

which seem to follow Gregory's reasoning in chapters XIII–XIV. There he discusses the renewal of mind and spiritual marriage with Christ. He demonstrates that life in virginity is the method of attaining perfection, a theme to which the last part of the treatise is dedicated. It is noteworthy that his teaching on spiritual marriage is directed to virgins:

> What then is the practical lesson from this? The chaste and thoughtful virgin must sever herself from any affection which can in any way impart contagion to her soul; she must keep herself pure for the Husband who has married her, 'not having spot or blemish or any such thing'.[302]

It is plain that the salutations of 19.8–12 deal with spiritual rebirth ("Hail, beginning of spiritual renewal", 19.8; "Hail, bestower of divine goodness", 19.9; "Hail, for you gave new birth to those conceived in shame", 19.10; "Hail, for you admonished those despoiled in mind", 19.11; "Hail, for you destroyed the corruptor of hearts", 19.12). It is likewise plain that in the rest of the salutations the theme of spiritual marriage is developed ("Hail, you who gave birth to the sower of purity", 19.13; "Hail, bridal chamber of a seedless marriage", 19.14;[303] "Hail, you who join the faithful with the Lord", 19.15; "Hail, fair nursing-mother of virgins", 19.16); "Hail, bridal escort of holy souls", 19.17). The section 19.8–17 covers the same topic as Gregory with the difference that *De Virginitate*, unlike the Akathistos, does not credit Mary with the spiritual renewal. To Gregory Mary is the ideal, not the initiator of the virgin life, which the Akathistos suggests. Gregory maintains that it was the Old Testament prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, who began the practice of the virtue of virginity.[304] The chapter on

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[302] *De Virginitate* XVI.2.10–14: Τί οὖν ἐκ τούτων μανθάνομεν; τὸ δεῖν τὴν σώφρονα καὶ λελογισμένην παρθένον παντὸς πάθους κατὰ πάντα τρόπον τῆς ψυχῆς ἁπτομένου χωρίζεσθαι καὶ φυλάσσειν ἑαυτὴν ἁγνὴν τῷ νομίμως αὐτὴν ἁρμοσαμένῳ νυμφίῳ, "μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἤ τι τῶν τοιούτων".

[303] Proclus, Hom. 1, *ACO* I.1.1.103.13–14: ἡ παστὰς ἐν ᾗ ὁ λόγος ἐνυμφεύσατο τὴν σάρκα. "The bridal chamber in which the Word wedded the flesh". Hesychius, Hom. 5, *PG* 93.1464B = Aubineau (1978), 5.2.24–6: ἐκ τῆς σῆς γαστρὸς καθάπερ ἔκ τινος παστάδος βασιλικῆς προέρχεται. "He emerges from your womb as if from a royal bridal chamber."

[304] The title of chapter XIX reads: Μνήμη Μαρίας τῆς ἀδελφῆς Ἀαρὼν ὡς ἀρξαμένης τούτου τοῦ κατορθώματος. "The commemoration of Miriam the sister of Aaron when she began this right action." The word κατορθώμα means 'that which is done rightly': 'a right action' (Liddell and Scott 1968). The τούτου refers to the preceding chapter, whose title teaches that "One has to turn to virtue with all the powers of the spirit" (Ὅτι χρὴ πάσας τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεις πρὸς ἀρετὴν βλέπειν.)

Miriam is extremely interesting from the point of view of the question of influence, for there Gregory presents a typology Miriam–Mary:

> Directly the sea was crossed she (Miriam) took in her hand a dry and sounding timbrel and conducted the women's dance. By this timbrel the story may mean to imply virginity, as first perceived by Miriam; who indeed I would believe to be a type of Mary, the bearer of God. Just as the timbrel emits a loud sound . . . so has virginity a clear and ringing report amongst men because it repels from itself the vital sap of merely physical life.[305]

The timbrel symbolizing virginity is not relevant to us but Gregory's depiction of Miriam conducting the women's dance, as he interprets the episode of the Exodus, is.[306] Particularly significant is the passage where Gregory speculates on Miriam's virginity and uses the expression: "Miriam led a dance of virgins",[307] for this is the point, I think, which makes one associate 'Miriam's virgins' with the 'virgins of Mary'. The analogy between Miriam, the type, who led a dance of virgins, and Mary, the antitype, who leads virgins who are spiritually married with Christ, is obvious. Moreover, the word χορηγός ('bestower' in "bestower of divine goodness", 19.9), which in the first place means 'one who leads the chorus', I see as reminiscent of the influence of the chorus of virgins (χορὸς τῶν παρθένων). Basically I believe that the typological way of thinking in itself contributed to developing the theme, since it can extend an idea considerably. Because Mary is the antitype of Miriam, who began the practice of the virtue of virginity, the complete meaning of the whole institution of the life in virginity is to be ascribed to Mary. In other words the antitype can reflect whatever the type and the original context may imply. As to the question of the influence of *De Virginitate* on strophe 19, I see Gregory's thinking as manifesting itself in the ascetical image of the Virgin, explicitly in the concept of the 'wall of protection'.

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[305] *De Virginitate* XIX.1–11: Ἡμῖν δὲ δίδωσι τὰ τοιαῦτα ὑπονοεῖν καὶ ἡ προφῆτις Μαρίαμ εὐθέως μετὰ τὴν θάλασσαν ξηρὸν καὶ εὔηχον μεταχειριζομένη τὸ τύμπανον καὶ τοῦ χοροῦ τῶν γυναικῶν προπομπεύουσα· τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦ τυμπάνου τὴν παρθενίαν ἔοικεν ὁ λόγος αἰνίττεσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς Μαρίας πρώτης κατορθωθεῖσαν, δι' ἧς οἶμαι καὶ τὴν θεοτόκον προδιατυποῦσθαι Μαρίαν. Ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ τύμπανον πολὺν τὸν ἦχον ἀφίησι . . . οὕτω καὶ ἡ παρθενία λαμπρά τε καὶ περιβόητος γίνεται μηδὲν ἐν ἑαυτῇ τῆς ζωτικῆς ἰκμάδος κατὰ τὸν βίον τοῦτον προσδεχομένη.

[306] Cf. Exod. 15.20.

[307] *De Virginitate* XIX.16–17: τῷ τὴν προφῆτην Μαριὰμ τοῦ χοροῦ τῶν παρθένων ἡγήσασθαι.

As a conclusion we can state that strophe 19 presents the concept Virgin, and the word 'Theotokos' (19.1) has no conceptual content.

Strophe 20

Strophe 20 is addressed to Christ as the holy King, whose compassion towards human beings is so great that no hymn can match it ("No hymn can recount the wealth of your great compassion", 20.1–2). We know that the great compassion alludes ultimately to Christ's death on the cross, but it is not uttered. The point of the sentence "we would achieve nothing worthy of your gifts to us, who cry to you: 'Alleluia'", 20.5) is not that Christ died on the cross, but that something is given to "us". Early Christianity emphasized that it is immortality that through the cross was brought to human beings. Therefore, let us express the matter in the words of Irenaeus, because the Akathistos is so closely related to his views: "To those who follow and serve him he provides life and imperishability and eternal glory."[308]

Strophe 21

The theme of baptism forms the basic structure of strophe 21, with which another theme is interlaced, that of perfection. I will treat first the latter theme. Perfection links the Akathistos once more with Gregory of Nyssa's *De Virginitate.* The understanding of the first verses of strophe 21 in accordance with the ascetical emphasis of the fifth century requires some knowledge of Gregory's teaching, the essential message of which the Akathistos takes for granted. In Gregory's 'philosophy' perfection means the *gnosis* of God. Seeing God is the goal of all ascetical striving for chaste life: "Real virginity, the real zeal for chastity, ends in no other goal than this, viz. the power to see God."[309] To 'see God', whom no one can see, is to be understood on the basis of the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."[310] In fact this

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[308] *Adversus Haereses* IV.14.16–18: Ipse autem sequentibus et servientibus ei vitam et incorruptelam et gloriam aeternam attribuit.

[309] *De Virginitate* XI.6.6–9: καὶ ἡ ἀληθινὴ παρθενία καὶ ἡ περὶ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν σπουδὴ εἰς τοῦτον τὸν σκοπὸν καταλήγει, τὸ δι' αὐτῆς δυνηθῆναι τὸν θεὸν ἰδεῖν.

[310] Matt. 5.8: μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν Θεὸν ὄψονται.

belief is the cornerstone of Gregory's ascetical teaching, and with it he finishes his work.[311] And it is relevant to the Akathistos, too, as we shall see.

In the last chapter of *De Virginitate* Gregory advices the "young and unformed in understanding" to "search out a fitting guide and master" on the way to perfection.[312] With this in mind he writes as follows:

> Now, if ever, saintliness abounds and penetrates our world; by gradual advances it has reached the highest mark of perfection; and one who follows such footsteps in his daily rounds may catch this halo; one who tracks the scent of this preceding perfume may be drenched in the fragrance of Christ himself. As, when one torch has been fired, flame is transmitted to all the neighbouring candlesticks . . . so the saintliness of a life is transmitted from him who has achieved it, to those who come within his circle.[313]

We can see the direct influence of this passage on the Akathistos. Firstly, the words ὀσμή ('scent') and Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ('fragrance of Christ') are included in 2 Corinthians 2.14–15, but the parallel context to strophe 21 is found only in *De Virginitate.* Therefore the sentence "one who tracks the scent of this preceding perfume may be drenched in the fragrance of Christ himself" has to be taken as the source of the salutation "Hail, scent of Christ's fragrance" (21.16). Further, it is apparent that the idea of Mary as the torch (21.1–5) is parallel to Gregory's model of the transmission of the saintliness of life. As for the metaphor of the "torch full of light, shining upon those in darkness" (21.1), it does not originate in Gregory's treatise. It is quite unique on account of the prophetic element (the association through 'in darkness') which is combined with the

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311 *De Virginitate* XXIII.7.52–69.

312 *De Virginitate* XXIII.3.1–6: Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ νέοι ἔτι καὶ ἀτελεῖς τὴν διάνοιαν οἱ πολλοὶ τῆς παρθενίας ἀντιλαμβάνονται, τοῦτο πρὸ πάντων αὐτοῖς ἐπιτηδευτέον ἂν εἴη, τὸ ζητῆσαι τῆς ὁδοῦ ταύτης ἀγαθὸν καθηγεμόνα τε καὶ διδάσκαλον. "Thus since many who are young and unformed in understanding seize hold of virginity, above all their task should be to search out a fitting guide and master on this path."

313 *De Virginitate* XXIII.5.1–14: Οὐκοῦν λυσιτελὲς ἂν εἴη μὴ νομοθετεῖν ἑαυτοῖς τοὺς νέους τὴν τοῦ βίου τούτου ὁδόν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιλέλοιπε τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν τὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὑποδείγματα, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα νῦν, εἴπερ ποτέ, ἡ σεμνότης ἤνθησε καὶ ἐπιχωριάζει τῷ βιῷ ἡμῶν πρὸς ἀκρότατον τοῖς κατ' ὀλίγον προσθήκαις ἀκριβωθεῖσα, ἧς ἔξεστι μετασχεῖν τὸν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἴχνεσι περιπατοῦντα καὶ τῆς ὀσμῆς τοῦ μύρου τούτου κατόπιν ἑπόμενον "τῆς εὐωδίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ" (2 Cor. 2.14–15) ἀναπίμπλασθαι. Καθάπερ γὰρ μιᾶς ἐξαφθείσης λαμπάδος εἰς πάντας τοὺς προσεγγίζοντας λύχνους ἡ τῆς φλογὸς διάδοσις γίνεται . . . οὕτω καὶ ἡ τοῦ βίου τούτου σεμνότης ἀπὸ τοῦ κατωρθωκότος αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς προσεγγίζοντας διαδίδοται.

torch.[314] Such a combination causes an epithet to emerge which looks analogical to the typological epithets, but it is not based on authentic typology. Anyhow, it displays excellently the relationship between Christ and Mary. In the "immaterial light" (το ἄϋλον φῶς) and in the "intellectual sun" (νοητὸς ἥλιος in: "Hail, beam of the spiritual sun", 21.6) I see a reflection of Gregory's (Platonic) terminology.[315]

The question of a guide with regard to Mary can be approached on the basis of Gregory himself. If we depart from Gregory's premise, from 'the real virginity', which Mary represents,[316] we come by necessity to the conclusion that Mary is the 'fitting' guide since she 'saw God'. And that is what the Akathistos presents: "by kindling the immaterial light she [i.e. the holy Virgin] guides all to divine knowledge, illuminating the mind with brilliance" (21.3–5).[317] It is noteworthy that the 'divine knowledge' appears already explicitly in those two strophes which focus on Mary's chastity, viz. in strophes 3 and 17.[318] Also the rhetorical pun γνῶσιν ἄγνοστον γνῶναι ἡ παρθένος ζητοῦσα ("the Virgin, yearning to grasp a knowledge unknowable", 3.1) suggests strongly that the Akathistos represents Mary as having *gnosis* of God in the sense Gregory gives it. The evidence that this is the case relates to the question I left open in dealing with strophe 3, concerning the epithet "the main chapter of his teachings" (τῶν δογμάτων αὐτοῦ τὸ κεφάλαιον, 3.9). The emphasis Gregory lays on the purification of the heart according to the teaching of Jesus is the key to the problem:

> To say, again, that one makes oneself worthy to see God produces no less a result than this, that one is made worthy to see God. Indeed, the crown of every hope, and of every desire, of every blessing, and of every promise

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[314] Isa. 9.1 (9.2) (quoted in Luke 1.79): ὁ λαὸς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει, ἴδετε φῶς μέγα· οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρᾳ καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου, φῶς λάμψει ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." Cf. Proclus, Hom. 1, *ACO* I.1.1.108.25–109.3.

[315] The word νοητός means in the first place 'intelligible', falling within the sphere of νοῦς, apprehended by the intellect; consult Lampe (1961) on its many meanings. When Proclus uses the epithet of the immaterial light for Christ (Hom. 2, *PG* 65.700C; Constas (1994), 132/153: τὸ ἀϋλον φῶς σαρκωθέντα ἐβάστασεν, "She bore the immaterial light made flesh"), Mary is not compared with the torch (λαμπάς) but the lampstand (λυχνία), which refers to the equipment of the tabernacle.

[316] Cf. II.2.18–21.

[317] Jaeger (1954), 74.

[318] "Hail, you who surpass the knowledge of the wise" (3.16), "Hail, you who illuminate the minds of the faithful" (3.17), "Hail, you who illuminate many with knowledge" (17.15).

> of God, and of all those unspeakable delights which we believe to exist beyond our perception and our knowledge—the crowning result (κεφάλαιον) of them all, I say, is this. Moses longed earnestly to see it, and many prophets and kings have desired to see the same: but the only class deemed worthy of it are the pure in heart, those who are, and are named 'blessed' for this very reason, that 'they shall see God'.[319]

The word κεφάλαιον, which appears in this context, proves the conceptual connection between *De Virginitate* and the Akathistos. The epithet "the main chapter of his teachings" makes sense in the framework of Gregory's ascetical teaching, which the author of the Akathistos has applied to Mary in the context of the mystery of the birth of Christ from her pure womb.

The early Christian notion of baptism as illumination is expressed e.g. in the *Apologia* of Justin Martyr: "This bath is called illumination, because the mind of those who learn these things is illumined within."[320] So, already the beginning of the strophe can be understood in this sense, but only in the salutations does it become evident. In the salutations some typical elements of baptism and its ritual are addressed to Mary, but the emphasis has been laid on illumination, which four epithets reflect ("Hail, beam of the spiritual sun, 21.6; "Hail, lampstand of the light that never wanes", 21.7; "Hail, soul-illuminating lightning", 21.8; "Hail, since you kindle the many-beamed lantern", 21.10). One epithet is concerned with the renunciation of the devil ("Hail, you who like thunder strike down the enemies", 21.9). There are the running waters ("Hail, since you make the many-streamed river gush forth", 21.11), and Christ's baptism as prototype of every Christian ("Hail, you who prefigure the baptismal font", 21.12). There is shown the forgiveness of sins in the baptismal font ("Hail, you who take away the filth of sin", 21.13: "Hail, basin that washes clean the conscience", 21.14), and finally there is a reference to the eucharist, which was the last rite in which the newly baptized catechumenate participated ("Hail, bowl wherein is mixed the

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[319] *De Virginitate* XXIII.7.52–62: Τοῦ δὲ τὸν Θεὸν αὐτὸν καταξιωθῆναι ἰδεῖν οὐκ ἄλλος τίς ἐστιν ὁ καρπὸς ἢ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ καταξιωθῆναι τὸν Θεὸν ἰδεῖν· πάσης γὰρ ἐλπίδος ἡ κορυφὴ καὶ πάσης ἐπιθυμίας κατόρθωμα, εὐλογίας τε Θεοῦ καὶ ἐπαγγελίας πάσης καὶ τῶν ἀρρήτων ἀγαθῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ αἴσθησίν τε καὶ γνῶσιν εἶναι πεπιστευμένων τὸ πέρας καὶ τὸ κεφάλαιον τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὃ καὶ Μωυσῆς ἰδεῖν ἐπεπόθησε καὶ πολλοὶ προφῆται καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐπεθύμησαν· ἀξιοῦνται δὲ μόνοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, οἱ διὰ τοῦτο ὄντως μακάριοι καὶ ὄντες καὶ ὀνομαζόμενοι, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν Θεὸν ὄψονται.

[320] *Apologia* I.61, *PG* 6.421B: Καλεῖται δὲ τοῦτο τὸ λουτρὸν φωτισμός, ὡς φωτιζομένων τὴν διάνοιαν τῶν ταῦτα μανθανόντων.

wine of mighty joy", 21.16; "Hail, life of mystical feasting", 21.17). The interpretation of this series of epithets within the framework of early Christian baptismal practice would form a study in itself, but from our viewpoint the interest lies in their attribution to Mary.

In the section "The Concepts" I demonstrated the conceptual connection between Mary's womb and the baptismal font. Such a connection is shown in the salutation, "Hail, you who prefigure the baptismal font" (21.12). Normally a type refers to the Old Testament, but here the baptismal font or Mary's womb is called the type, signifying obviously the beginning of a new era in *ta eschata*. In the section "The Concepts" I presented the supposition that since baptism was understood to belong to the 'repairing process of the Fall', the baptismal aspect was connected with Mary through the concept of Second Eve, because of the part of Mary in the plan of redemption. No doubt verses 21.9 and 21.13–14 can be interpreted in the context of the 'repairing process'. Apart from this, I think that strophe 21 reflects the feast of the Epiphany, which in turn points to the antiquity of the hymn, as the Epiphany was originally a feast to celebrate the Incarnation.[321] The introduction of the feast of 25 December in the fourth century had caused the division of the Epiphany into two feasts, Nativity and Epiphany. The fact that the Akathistos, i.e. a hymn of the Incarnation, discusses baptism, might be explained by the liturgical practice in Constantinople.[322] Unfortunately we do not know enough about this.

It is plain that the emphasis of strophe 21 lies in the idea of illumination, which in the first place directs the thoughts to perfection and to the seeing of God. The theme of baptism becomes explicit only in the salutations. In the image of Mary Gregory's thinking is reflected; perfection, attained through virginity, enables one to see God. This whole ascetical approach is encompassed by the concept Virgin. The baptismal aspect on the other hand is to be reduced to the concept Second Eve.

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[321] The word 'epiphany' (ἐπιφάνεια) refers to the manifestation of the incarnate Christ, which took place in the baptism of Jesus in Jordan, cf. Lampe (1961). According to Merras (1995), 192, in the context of the Epiphany Christ's carnal birth and his baptism as the prototype of the baptism of every Christian were closely connected.

[322] Talley (1991), 127: "At Constantinople . . . Epiphany became a baptismal day only when the unified celebration of the birth and baptism was divided through the adoption of the feast of December, leaving the Epiphany devoted to the baptism alone."

Strophe 22

Strophe 22 deals with salvation as redemption. It has become clear already that redemption is an early Christian conception of salvation, whereby the work of Christ was to redeem human beings who because of the Fall were enslaved to the devil. The Akathistos takes the "tearing up the record of sins" as a synonym for redemption. Proclus's homily against Nestorius bears witness to the relevance, in the arguments over the Theotokos, of redemption as a saving effect of the Incarnation:[323] it is especially noteworthy that Proclus defends Mary's theological position by the argument of ransom: "He paid the ransom of his own blood. He gave to death in exchange for mankind the body taken from the virgin that he bore."[324] Strophe 22 refers explicitly to the ancient debts (22.1) and seems to emphasize that the redemption concerns all human beings (22.2, 5). The tearing up of the record (22.5) goes back to Colossians 2.14, which shows that it means the death of Christ on the cross.[325] While the Akathistos is silent about the theme of the death of Christ, it brings out how redemption takes the place of grace (22.1, 4). The word ἐπιδημέω relates to Alexandrian terminology.

Strophe 23

Strophe 23 is the proclamation of the Theotokos, as I characterized it in the section "The Theotokos Controversy". There is no doubt that in four epithets the official status of the Theotokos in the Empire and the Church is confirmed ("Hail, precious diadem of pious kings", 23.10;[326] "Hail, holy exaltation of devout priests", 23.11 "Hail, immovable tower of the Church", 23.12; "Hail, impregnable wall of the kingdom", 23.13). In conciliar affairs the pattern of the role of the emperor was generally

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[323] Cf. *ACO* I.1.1.105 ff.

[324] *ACO* I.1.1.106.13–15: ἀλλ' ἦλθεν ὁ ἀεὶ παρὼν καὶ κατέλαβεν λύτρον τὸ οἰκεῖον αἷμα καὶ ἔδωκεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους ἀντάλλαγμα τῷ θανάτῳ ὃ ἐκ παρθένου ἐφόρεσεν σῶμα.

[325] Col. 2.14: ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν. καὶ αὐτὸ ἦρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ. "Erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross."

[326] Since Constantine the emperors were 'pious', cf. Eusebius's oration on the thirteenth anniversary of Constantine's reign, Or. 2, *De Laudibus Constantini* 199, 203, 300, 201.

accepted. According to Meyendorff "the goal of the emperor was to assure the orderly triumph of the majority of a council".[327] The salutations "Hail, through whom trophies are raised up" (23.14) and "Hail, through whom enemies fall" (23.15), are exceptionally ambiguous, for they may be concerned with the enemies of the Empire and the Church, or they may refer to spiritual enemies. The word τρόπαιον for the cross of Christ appears at the end of *De Virginitate*, corroborating the impression that the author of the Akathistos was influenced by it:

> How can you, who are not crucified to the world, and will not accept the mortification of the flesh, obey Him Who bids you follow after Him, and Who bore the Cross in His own body, as a trophy from the foe?[328]

It is the Lord himself who authorizes the salutations to Mary (23.4–5), wherefore presumably the first salutations relate to the Theotokos resolution. They are typological, because, I think, they are to constitute a testimony to Mary: "Hail, tabernacle of God and the Word" (23.6), "Hail, greater than the Holy of Holies" (23.7), "Hail, ark gilded by the Spirit" (23.8). These epithets refer to the context of Exodus, where the instructions for the construction of the tabernacle were given, and from which also the epithets of 5.11, 5.14 and 5.15 are derived. So, in typological thinking, the words 'tabernacle', 'holy of holies' and 'ark' (σκηνή, ἁγία ἁγίων and κιβωτός), as referring to the place which was sanctified to the Lord,[329] constitute a testimony to Mary as a place of God, i.e. the Theotokos. Therefore it is reasonable to ask when such testimony emerged for the first time.

Caro's summary of the Marian epithets shows that the word κιβωτός appears occasionally already in the fourth century.[330] In the Ephesian period the word κιβωτός is more popular (Hesychius, Proclus, Theodotus of Ancyra, Pseudo-Chrysostom and Basil of Seleucia) than the σκηνή, the σκηνή being found only in Cyril of Alexandria and Pseudo-Theodotus. The ἁγία ἁγίων does not appear at that time. This trend continues up till the sixth century. On these grounds it is plausible that

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[327] Meyendorff (1989), 34.

[328] *De Virginitate* XXIII.7.18–23: Πῶς ἀκούεις τοῦ ἐσταυρωμένου, ὁ ζῶν, τοῦ ἀποθανόντος τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ὁ κατ' αὐτὴν ὑγιαίνων, τοῦ κελεύοντος τὴν ἀκολούθησιν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ τι τρόπαιον κατὰ τοῦ ἀντικειμένου τὸν σταυρὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος φέφοντος, ὁ μὴ σταυρούμενος τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς σαρκὸς μὴ δεχόμενος; cf. Dinkler (1967).

[329] Exod. 24–6. σκηνή cf. Exod. 26, ἁγία ἁγίων cf. 26.31, 33, κιβωτός cf. 25.10–16; cf. also Heb. 9.1–4.

[330] Cf. Caro (1971–3), 685.

the author exploited known typologies. As regards the epithets of strophe 5, according to Caro's list they do not appear at all in the fifth-century homilies. Nothing more can be said about them without a proper examination of a greater number of texts. The salutation "Hail, inexhaustible treasury of life" (23.9), following after the typological epithets, is conceptually connected with the concept of Theotokos. It reflects a spiritual idea, which is related to Gregory's ascetical teaching.[331]

The word ναός ('temple'), which precedes the exclamation to the Theotokos, is not typological ("we all praise you as a living temple, O Theotokos", 23.1–2), because the explicit Old Testament reference of patristic interpretative tradition is lacking.[332] According to Caro's listing, ναός as an epithet of Mary appears more frequently than σκηνή and κιβωτός, and it is met for the first time in Hesychius. In Proclus is found a remark concerning the temple, which in this connection is especially interesting: "And just as the lampstand is not itself the source of the light but the vehicle of the light, so too, the virgin is not herself God, but God's temple."[333] The use of the word 'temple' for Mary had obviously caused misunderstanding. No wonder, since in the Antiochian tradition the "body is the temple of the deity of the Son" as Nestorius asserts.[334]

Despite the apparent theological relevance of the word 'temple', I tend to think that the influence of Gregory of Nyssa's *De Virginitate* is reflected here, too. The attribute ἔμψυχος ('living') suggests that the temple is associated with the teaching of Gregory.[335] First it can be stated that the 'living temple' (with the explanation: "for the Lord dwelt in your womb", 23.3) is in conformity with the famous passage of *De Virginitate*, by which Mary's position as the model of imitation is estab-

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331 E.g. *De Virginitate* XX.4.1–11.

332 Cf. Lampe (1961) on the various meanings of ναός.

333 Hom. 2, *PG* 65.700D; Constas (1994), 132/153: καὶ ὥσπερ ἡ λυχνία οὐκ αὐτὴ φωτὸς αἰτία, ἀλλὰ φωτὸς ὄχημα, οὕτως καὶ ἡ παρθένος οὐκ αὐτὴ Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ Θεοῦ ναός. Caro dates the homily to 420–5. The homily is clearly a compilation. I believe the part in which Proclus's assertion appears could be traced to the time when the Theotokos schism was already acute.

334 Cf. Tanner (1990), 48.

335 The basic meaning of ἔμψυχος is related to ἐμψυχόω, 'to animate' (Liddell and Scott 1968, cf. Lampe (1961) on the various meanings). Gregory uses the word ἔμψυχος in the penultimate passage, when he explains why a model for imitation is necessary, and when he asserts that "those living in the Spirit" (ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ζῶντες) are fitting guides (*De Virginitate* XXIII.6).

lished.[336] Strophe 21 proves already that in the Akathistos Mary is considered as guide. In the life of the virgins, to whom Gregory directs his instructions, the preserving of the chastity of the body as well as the soul was the primary concern. This aspect is shown in the very last epithets, which at the same time imply an emotional involvement, truly credible if they are pronounced by the virgins who follow Mary: "Hail, healing of my body" (23.16); "Hail, protection of my soul" (12.17).

The conceptual image of Mary in strophe 23 is heterogeneous. The image shows a new feature, that of official status (23.13–14). The role of the patroness which is seen already in strophe 19 is confirmed (23.16–17). The concept Theotokos appears explicitly in the typological epithets (23.6–8). The epithet "temple" represents the concept Theotokos, whereas in the "living temple" an ascetical element is involved. There are two ambiguous epithets, which can be interpreted in different contexts (23.14–15). An ascetical element is recognizable in six cases (23.2, 23.9, 23.14–17).

Strophe 24

The intensive praise of the Theotokos concludes with the exaltations, O, Mother and Alleluia in strophe 24. The Christological position of Mary is confirmed: she is the τεκοῦσα (birth-giver) of the Logos. The hymn which has now been sung to Mary is said to be a προσφορά (offering). I see this idea as coming from Gregory. The offering is found at the very end of *De Virginitate*, where a gift to God is discussed.[337] (That passage may have also contributed to the emergence of the 'living temple').

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[336] *De Virginitate* II.2.18–27: ὅπερ γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀμιάντῳ Μαρίᾳ γέγονε σωματικῶς, "τοῦ πληρώματος τῆς θεότητος" ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ διὰ τῆς παρθενίας ἐκλάμψαντος, τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ πάσης ψυχῆς κατὰ λόγον παρθενεούσης γίνεται. "What happened in the stainless Mary when the fullness of the Godhead which was in Christ shone through her, that happens in every soul that leads the virgin life according to the word."

[337] XXIII.7.29–35: Πῶς ἱερατεύεις Θεῷ καίτοι εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο χρισθείς, εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρον τῷ Θεῷ, δῶρον δὲ οὐκ ἀλλότριόν τι πάντως οὐδὲ ὑποβολιμαῖον ἐκ τῶν ἔξωθέν σοι παρεπομένων, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀληθῶς σόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ ἔσω σου ἄνθρωπος, τέλειός τε καὶ ἄμωμος εἶναι ὀφείλων κατὰ τὸν περὶ τοῦ ἀμνοῦ νόμον, πάσης κηλίδος τε καὶ λώβης ἀπηλλαγμένος; "How can you be a priest unto God, anointed though you are for this very office to offer a gift to God; a gift in no way another's, no counterfeited gift from sources outside yourself, but a gift that is really your own, namely 'the inner man', who must be perfect and blameless, as it is required of a lamb to be without spot or blemish?"

Besides the praise and the offering to Mary, there is also a prayer to her. In the chapter "The Veneration of Mary" I presented my notion of its origins in an eschatological context. In dealing with the theme of the intercession of Mary, I clarified how it is connected with the concept Second Eve. I have nothing more to add.

Thus in strophe 24 the concept Theotokos appears explicitly, whereas the concept Second Eve is presented indirectly: "Deliver from every evil and the punishment to come all those who cry to you" (24.4–5).

Refrains

I have left the interpretative analysis of the refrains "Hail, bride unwedded" and "Alleluia" till last, since I see the use of the two different refrains as fundamentally defining the structure of the poem. The double theme of the poem, the Incarnation and the praise of Mary, is organized around them. Thus the refrain "Alleluia" is used in that part of the narrative dealing with the significance of the Incarnation, and the refrain "Hail, bride unwedded" in the praise of Mary. The appearance of the Alleluia in the Akathistos reflects the observance of a very ancient tradition. Alleluia had become particularly favoured in liturgical poetry already in the primitive Christian period, and onto it were often appended the acclamations of the troparia sung by the congregation.[338] The original ethos of the Alleluia was the proclamation of joy.[339] The Alleluia was considered as a 'heavenly song',[340] and thus was cultivated in circles which emulated the life of angels: the singing of the Alleluia was regarded as a fitting exercise for monks, the devotees of asceticism. In the Akathistos the ethos of the Alleluia is likewise a proclamation of joy and thanksgiving. In the strophes of the first part of the hymn (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12) the Alleluia has no proper object, whereas in the second part (14, 16, 18, 20, 22) the Alleluia is directed clearly at Christ, other than in the last strophe. In strophes 14 and 18 the Alleluia appears in the context of following Christ. In strophe 20 it is uttered as an expression of thanks for the immortality brought about through the sacrificial death of

[338] Cf. Engbergin (1950).
[339] Engbergin (1950), 296.
[340] Engbergin (1950), 297.

Christ, and in 22 the ripping up the account book of sin provides the subject matter for the Alleluia verse.

The refrain "Hail, bride unwedded", with which the series of salutations to Mary conclude, leaves its stamp on the whole hymn, as well as on the image of Mary. The ascetical mode of the Akathistos is underlined by the fact that in Greek the point of "Hail, bride unwedded" is not that Mary is chaste and yet can give birth, but that she has no experience of marriage (cf. also 2.1, 4.2, 6.3–4). Such an emphasis is not found in the New Testament (Luke 1.34, Matthew 1.18–25) and is therefore to be viewed as reflecting the value system of the society which produced the hymn. The last strophe of the hymn, in which the effects consequent upon the Incarnation are indicated, concludes with a thanksgiving Alleluia to Mary. This forms a resolute testimony that Mary's role is seen to stretch beyond the unique birth-giving of the Logos. Thus it is indisputable that in the Akathistos Mary is depicted from the point of view of God's plan of salvation as the Second Eve.

Rereading the Akathistos Hymn

The concepts of which the Marian image is composed, and which show the result of the analysis, appear in the following summary. It takes into account all the references in the text to Mary. The abbreviations for the basic concepts are marked by V for the Virgin, E for the Second Eve, T for the Theotokos. Ascetical elements are marked by A. The letter O is the common sign for all other elements.

Strophe 1

2	T	the Theotokos
	E	Hail, through whom joy shall shine forth
	E	Hail, through whom the curse shall cease
	E	Hail, recalling of fallen Adam
	E	Hail, deliverance of the tears of Eve
10	E	Hail, height hard for human thoughts to scale
	E	Hail, depth hard even for the eyes of angels to pierce
	T	Hail, since you are the chair of the king
	T	Hail, since you bear him who bears all
	T	Hail, star causing the sun to shine
15	T	Hail, womb of the divine Incarnation
	E	Hail, through whom the creation is made new

	E	Hail, through whom the Creator is worshipped
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 2

1	VA	(the holy one), seeing herself to be chaste
1	O	the holy one
5	V	childbirth from a conception without seed

Strophe 3

1	VA	(the Virgin), yearning to grasp a knowledge unknowable
1	V	the Virgin
3–4	V	how can a son be born of chaste loins
	E	Hail, initiate of sacred counsel
	EA	Hail, faith of those who pray in silence
	V	Hail, prelude to the miracles of Christ
	VA	Hail, main chapter of his teachings
10	ET	Hail, celestial ladder by which God descended
	E	Hail, bridge leading those from earth to heaven
	EVA	Hail, marvel greatly lauded by the angels
	EVA	Hail, wound greatly lamented by the demons
	V	Hail, you who ineffably gave birth to the light
15	VO	Hail, you who taught nobody 'how'
	EVA	Hail, you who surpass the knowledge of the wise
	EVA	Hail, you who illuminate the minds of the faithful
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 4

1	VA	her that knew not wedlock
3–4	VO	she showed forth her fruitful womb as a sweet field

Strophe 5

1	V	the Virgin
1	T	bearing God in her womb
5	T	the Theotokos
	ETO	Hail, vine-twig of unfading bud
	ETO	Hail, treasure of undying fruit
	ETO	Hail, you who till the tiller who loves humankind
	ETO	Hail, you who cultivate the cultivator of our life
10	E	Hail, earth that flourishes with a fertility of compassion
	E	Hail, table that bears a wealth of mercy
	E	Hail, since you make the meadow of delights blossom again
	EA	Hail, since you make ready a haven for the souls

	E	Hail, acceptable incense of intercession
15	E	Hail, atonement for the whole world
	E	Hail, good will of God towards mortals
	EO	Hail, freedom of approach for mortals before God
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 6

3	VA	unwedded
4	V	blameless
5	V	your conceiving by the Holy Spirit

Strophe 7

4–5	TO	as a lamb without spot, pastured in Mary's womb
	O	Hail, mother of the lamb and the shepherd
	O	Hail, fold of spiritual sheep
	O	Hail, protection against unseen wild beasts
	E	Hail, key to the gates of Paradise
10	O	Hail, since heavenly things rejoice with the earth
	O	Hail, since earthly things chant with the faithful
	O	Hail, unsilenced mouth of the apostles
	O	Hail, unvanquished courage of the martyrs
	O	Hail, firm foundation of the faith
15	O	Hail, brilliant token of grace
	EO	Hail, through whom Hades was stripped bare
	EO	Hail, through whom we were clothed in glory
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 9

1	V	the Virgin's
1–2	T	in (the Virgin's) hands him who with his hand fashioned humankind
5	O	to the blessed (Virgin)
	T	Hail, mother of the star that never sets
	T	Hail, bright dawn of the mystical day
	E	Hail, you who closed the furnace of deception
	T	Hail, you who protect the initiates of the Trinity
10	E	Hail, you who have cast the inhuman tyrant from his dominion
	E	Hail, you who showed forth the Lord Christ, who loves humankind
	EA	Hail, deliverance from pagan worship

EA Hail, liberation from miry deeds
EA Hail, you who quenched the worship of fire
15 EA Hail, you who released us from the flame of passions
EA Hail, guide of the Persians to temperance
EA Hail, joy of all generations
VA Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 11

5 T the Theotokos
E Hail, elevation of humans
E Hail, downfall of demons
E Hail, you who trampled upon the delusion of error
E Hail, you who refuted the deceit of the idols
10 E Hail, sea that drowned the spiritual Pharaoh
E Hail, rock, giving water to those who thirst for life
E Hail, pillar of fire, guiding those in darkness
E Hail, protection of the world, wider than the cloud
E Hail, food, following after manna
15 E Hail, minister of holy joy
E Hail, promised land
E Hail, from whom flow milk and honey
VA Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 13

3 VO from the seedless womb he came
4 TO preserving it chaste as it was before
VA Hail, flower of incorruption
VA Hail, crown of continence
EA Hail, you who shine forth the prefiguration of resurrection
VA Hail, you who show forth the life of the angels
10 EO Hail, tree of glorious fruit on which the faithful feed
EO Hail, wood of fair shading leaves where many shelter
E Hail, you who brought into the world the deliverer of captives
E Hail, you who conceived the guide to whose who wander astray
E Hail, conciliation of the Righteous Judge
15 E Hail, forgiveness for many who have stumbled
E Hail, robe of free intercession given to the naked
AO Hail, love conquering all desire
VA Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 15

5	V	birth from the Virgin
5	E	seized by God
	T	Hail, container of the uncontainable God
	TE	Hail, gate of hallowed mystery
	O	Hail, tidings doubted by unbelievers
	O	Hail, undoubted boast of believers
10	T	Hail, all-holy chariot of him who is above the Cherubim
	T	Hail, excellent dwelling-place for him who is above the Seraphim
	V	Hail, you who bring opposites together
	V	Hail, you who unite virginity and childbirth
	E	Hail, through whom sin is remitted
15	E	Hail, through whom Paradise is opened
	E	Hail, key to the kingdom of Christ
	E	Hail, hope of eternal blessings
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 17

2	T	Theotokos
3–4	VTO	how you remained virgin and yet had power to bear a child
	VE	Hail, vessel of the wisdom of God
	VE	Hail, treasure of his providence
	VA	Hail, you who reveal lovers of wisdom as unwise
	VA	Hail, you who refute practitioners of reason as unreasonable
10	VA	Hail, since the cunning disputants are shown to be fools
	VA	Hail, since the myth-makers have withered in silence
	VA	Hail, you who have torn asunder the tangled webs of the Athenians
	VA	Hail, you who have filled the nets of the fishermen
	VA	Hail, you who draw us forth from the depths of ignorance
15	VA	Hail, you who illuminate many with knowledge
	EO	Hail, ship for those who wish to be saved
	EO	Hail, haven for the seafarers of life
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 19

1	VA	for virgins (and for all who flee to you) you are a wall
1	V	Virgin
1	T	Theotokos

3–5 VA the Maker of heaven and earth constructed you, undefiled, by dwelling in your womb
VA Hail, pillar of virginity
VAE Hail, gate of salvation
VA Hail, beginning of spiritual renewal
VA Hail, bestower of divine goodness
10 VA Hail, for you gave new birth to those conceived in shame
VA Hail, for you admonished those despoiled in mind
VA Hail, you who destroyed the corruptor of hearts
VA Hail, you who gave birth to the sower of purity
VA Hail, bridal chamber of a seedless marriage
15 VA Hail, you who join the faithful with the Lord
VA Hail, fair nursing-mother of virgins
VA Hail, bridal escort of holy souls
VA Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 21

1 VAT (the holy Virgin as) a torch full of light, shining upon those in darkness
2 VO the holy Virgin
3–5 VA for by kindling the immaterial light she guides all to divine knowledge, illuminating the mind with brilliance
E Hail, beam of the spiritual sun
E Hail, lampstand of the light that never wanes
E Hail, soul-illuminating lightning
E Hail, you who like thunder strike down the enemies
10 E Hail, since you kindle the many-beamed lanterns
E Hail, since you make the many-streamed river gush forth
E Hail, you who prefigure the baptismal font
E Hail, you who take away the filth of sin
E Hail, basin that washes clean the conscience
15 E Hail, bowl wherein is mixed the wine of mighty joy
E Hail, scent of Christ's fragrance
E Hail, life of mystical feasting
VA Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 23

1 T as we sing in honour of your giving birth, we all praise you
2 TVA a living temple
2 T Theotokos

3–4	TO	the Lord who holds all in his hands dwelt in your womb—made you holy, made you glorious, and taught us all to cry to you
	T	Hail, tabernacle of God and the Word
	T	Hail, greater than the Holy of Holies
	T	Hail, ark gilded by the Spirit
	TA	Hail, inexhaustible treasury of life
10	O	Hail, precious diadem of pious kings
	O	Hail, holy exaltation of devout priests
	O	Hail, immovable tower of the Church
	O	Hail, impregnable wall of the kingdom
	AO	Hail, through whom trophies are raised up
15	AO	Hail, through whom enemies fall
	VA	Hail, healing of my body
	VA	Hail, protection of my soul
	VA	Hail, bride unwedded

Strophe 24

1	O	Mother hymned by all
1–2	T	you who gave birth to the Word, the holiest of all holies
3	A	accepting this present offering
4–5	E	deliver from every evil and from the punishment to come all those who cry to you

Statistically the analysis shows the following result:

V	T	E	A	O
70	34	83	65	40

The numerical division into conceptual elements indicates that the Theotokos represents a clear minority in comparison with the two other main concepts, the Virgin and the Second Eve. This result signifies in the first place that expressions pointing to the nature of Christ are found in the hymn noticeably less often than those which are linked to the paradox of the virgin birth (the Virgin), or to the economy of salvation (the Second Eve). In other words the statistics confirm that the Christ-ological debate is reflected as a relatively thin layer in the Akathistos Hymn's image of Mary. The statistics do not however reveal that this layer is found at the climaxes of the hymn (at the beginning 1.12–15, at the culmination 13.4, 15.6–7, 15.10–11, and most forcefully at the end 23.2–4, 23.6–9, 24.1–2), and that its essential content is the 'place' of the Incarnation of the Logos of God. Nor do the statistics indicate that the arguments of the defenders of the Theotokos appear in the hymn (13.4

and 17.3–4), and that in the Christologically most important strophe 15 is to be seen the formula, distinctive to the whole Theotokos dispute, 'container of the uncontainable' (χώρα ἀχωρήτου), preceding expressions from which it may be concluded that debate or acceptance of that very concept (or formula) is under question (15.8–9). In addition, as the confirmation of Mary's official status as Theotokos (23.10–13) and the hint of victory (23.13–14) are also reflected in the image of Mary, there is sufficient material in the hymn itself to justify the assertion that we are dealing with a consciously drawn up depiction of the object of doctrinal dispute.

The crudely numbered image of Mary also shows that the Second Eve is dominant but that the difference from the Virgin is not great. The hymn's frame of reference, the recapitulation theory, which is to be traced to Irenaeus, explains the dominance of the Second Eve. Thus in the Second Eve there is seen more or less explicitly an explanation of world history on the Irenaean model from the creation of the first human to the creation anew of the world. I take a few examples: 'a new creation' (13.1) supposes the creation of the first Adam; the Fall is to be understood as the reason for the Incarnation (1.7–9); Mary corrects the wrongdoing of Eve (1.9); God has a design (3.6); the Incarnation takes place because of God's philanthropy (5.8); the Incarnation is depicted as the redemption from the debt of sin (22, 13.12); Paradise will be created anew (5.13), as will creation (1.14). It is therefore natural that in view of its breadth the Second Eve forms the fundamental layer of the image of Mary in the Akathistos. But this is not all, for the Akathistos defines Mary's theological position with the help of the concept of Second Eve.

The hymn begins with the account of the Annunciation, within the framework of which the concept of the Second Eve has its origin in the first place, but it does not reiterate the idea of Mary's obedience; rather it takes as its starting point the banishing through Mary of the curse meted out to humankind through Adam and Eve (1.6–9). Thus the Akathistos maintains that salvation comes to humankind through the Second Eve.[341] This idea is repeated in the hymn in different forms (e.g. 3.11, str. 5, 7.17, 9.17, 11.16–17, 13.10–11, 15.7, 15.14–17, str. 21). Because the Second Eve is a precondition for the Incarnation, it is at the same time also a precondition for the effects being perceived as a 'process of correction' of the Fall, as is revealed in the case of the Church

[341] Cf. Starowieyski (1989), 128.

(7.9, 7.16–17, 11.6–9) and of baptism (21.13–14). In general, whenever it is a matter of something happening anew it can be referred back to the Eve–Mary parallel (e.g. 1.16, 5.12, 11.6). On the other hand it is noticeable that the term of Christological debate and concept of the Theotokos cannot be discerned in the chain of concepts which begins from the Eve–Mary parallel. For this reason, as the conceptual unity is lacking, it is impossible to justify sensibly, on the basis of the word 'Theotokos', the greetings of strophe 11, although according to the account of the hymn they are all epithets of the Theotokos. Such an attribution does not prove a genuine synthesis of the concepts of Second Eve and Theotokos (e.g. 3.10–11 and 15.7) but that the word 'Theotokos' is used as an appellation. All in all it may be affirmed that the long history of the development of the Eve–Mary parallel is revealed in the image of Mary in respect of the intentional emphasizing of the new Christological term 'Theotokos'.

The concept of the Virgin is also significant in terms of number of occurrences. This is explained by the hymn's ascetical background, which is most clearly seen precisely in the concept of the Virgin: in as many as fifty-one cases the ascetical element, which in all appears in sixty-five expressions, emerges in connection with the Virgin. The paradox of the virgin birth, which forms the core of the Virgin concept, and which goes back to the prophecy of Isaiah on the birth of the Messiah (Isaiah 7.14), is referred to only eight times (3.3–4, 3.8, 3.14–15, 13.3, 15.5, 15.12–13). It is therefore numerically evident that the depiction of the ascetical Virgin controls the concepts of the Virgin in the image of Mary in the Akathistos. 'Ascetical Virgin' reflects the ideal of the purity of body and soul (13.6–7, str. 19), mirrors the set of values of the ascetical life (3.1, 3.9, 3.16–17, 17.8–14) and in the refrain χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε, refers indirectly to the way of thought characteristic of early female asceticism, that a virgin is Christ's bride. In the 'Ascetical Virgin' is seen both the imitation of Mary and that role of protector and guide which developed for Mary as a consequence of the imitation (19.1–5, 19.8–9, 19.16–17, 21.1–5, 23.16–17).

It was clear from the analysis that there are points of contact both linguistic and thematic between the Akathistos and Gregory of Nyssa's treatise *De Virginitate*, which offer grounds for supposing that the Akathistos Hymn's 'Ascetical Virgin' is inspired by Gregory's teaching. The idea, distinctive to Gregory's thought, of the knowledge of God through the cleansing of the heart in accordance with Jesus's teaching, is presented in a form accommodated to Mary ("Hail, main chapter of his

teachings", 3.9) in a passage in which the hymn's own context forces the interpretation to be left open, if the literal meaning of the sentence is retained. However, this passage, as also strophes 19 ("For virgins and for all who flee to you you are a wall") and 21 ("torch full of light"), emerges as concrete and precise in its meaning when the frame of reference from which it originates is recognized. To what extent the Akathistos Hymn in fact reflects Gregory's teaching is a matter for another investigation, but it is evident that the essential aspects of the 'Ascetical Virgin' are to be found in the work of Gregory.

These are the fundamental elements of the image of Mary in the Akathistos, which explain a great part of the references in the text to Mary. Nothing is left without explanation in terms of the concepts which I drew up for the analysis, although the strong ascetical stamp is to some extent surprising. Chronologically speaking an image of Mary could already have been composed out of these elements before the Council of Ephesus. But this is not the whole picture, for altogether forty expressions point to other conceptual links. Amongst them are the ten expressions previously presented in connection with the summary on the Theotokos, which bear witness to the Theotokos dispute. In addition one epithet is found which points clearly to that stage of the Christological debate when the essential question was how the Incarnation physically took place ("Hail, you who taught nobody 'how'", 3.15). This of course was a question that was already relevant before Ephesus. The remaining twenty-eight expressions contain the epithets "holy" (ἁγία, 2.1, 21.2) and "blessed" (εὐλογημένη, 9.5), whose association with Mary took place in the first century. To Irenaeus's discussions of the significance of the virgin earth in the creation of the second Adam are to be traced altogether six expressions (4.3–4, 5.6–9, 13.3). The taste of the early Byzantines for the rhetoric of the sea voyage is seen in two instances (17.16–17). Although the justification of the epithet "freedom of approach for mortals before God" (5.17) is in the concept of the Second Eve, it indubitably testifies also to the cult of Mary. As is clear from my research, the way of thought which produced the *parrhesia* epithet is in origin ancient and has no conceptual connection with the Theotokos. The epithets found in strophe 13 which recount a cult of Mary (13.10–11, 13.17) are, on the basis of their context, to be associated with a framework of asceticism. The rhetorical exclamation of the last strophe, "O Mother", as a contrast to the Virgin, which appears throughout the hymn, reflects that period when female asceticism flourished within the framework of the model of the Virgin Mother, as

Proclus's famous Marian homily testifies. Note at this point that none of these marginal elements essentially alters the picture which is formed from the main concepts, but rather they deepen it.

The greatest single conceptual area concerns the Church (7) and it is not explained by the familiar basic concepts. As appeared in the analysis, in the narrative of the hymn a frame of reference arises from the union of shepherd and sheep in which Mary is presented as the Church (7.7). A separate investigation would be warranted into how the "mother of the lamb" ("Hail, mother of the lamb and the shepherd", 7.6), which perhaps points to the concept known already in the second century of Mary as a fair sheep, is connected with this concept. It must be added that Mary as the Church may not basically be accommodated with the allegory of the Church depicted in strophe 11, which goes back to the concept of the Second Eve. From what it has been possible to clarify from an unresearched field, I conclude that the poet has accommodated his concept of the Church to Mary, and not that he has portrayed Mary as the Church in accordance with an already established intellectual model. There is material that testifies to the comparison of Mary to the Church from a time long before Ephesus.[342]

The analysis has shown that the picture of Mary in the Akathistos is an integral image in its own right. However, it cannot be reduced to the sole concept of the Theotokos, although the hymn does proclaim the dogma of the Theotokos. As I surmised, the image reflects to a great extent those notions about Mary whose roots lie in the New Testament and in the explanation of Christian world history. It also reflects the values of the ascetical life and the ideal promulgated by Gregory of Nyssa according to which Mary was seen as an example "to every soul" striving for salvation (nor is it surprising that the only trace of personality appearing in the image accords with the ascetical standard). We are therefore justified in speaking specifically of the image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn.

Conclusion on the Image of the Virgin Mary

Now that the conceptual structure of the image of Mary has been explained, it is possible to state the following:

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[342] Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403), *Adversus Haereses* III.2.19, *PG* 42.729D–732.

The significance of Mary in the Incarnation is presented through the Eve–Mary parallel and not through the Theotokos concept. This points to a relatively early date for the hymn. The dominance of the Second Eve, which forms the conceptual foundation of the image of Mary, correlates with the historical situation, for before Ephesus speculation on the significance of Mary took place mainly within the frame of reference of the Second Eve.

The stratum reflecting the dispute and dogma concerning the Theotokos is the thinnest in the image of Mary, since it represents the latest state of development. Its intentional emphasizing however leaves no room for doubt: it reflects the victory of correct belief at the Council of Ephesus, which was regarded as the triumph of the Theotokos. This explains the salutations and the hymn's triumphant character.

The concept of the Virgin only partially reflects the conditions of Christ's birth stemming from the prophecy of Isaiah, while the main emphasis is on the 'Ascetical Virgin', which the narrative of the Incarnation does not in itself demand, but which the ascetical background explains. Constantinople was already famous for its female asceticism by the beginning of the fifth century, but it developed into the true 'city of virgins' under Empress Pulcheria. The 'Ascetical Virgin' of strophe 19 presents the typical teaching of that time, that the imitation of Mary takes place as a reflection of the Virgin's chaste birth-giving. The imitation of Mary was relevant at the time of the Theotokos dispute, one part of which concerned the virgins, as the beginning of Proclus's homily against Nestorius demonstrates. The 'Ascetical Virgin' represents the conceptual field which manifests the ideal of female ascetics of the time of Ephesus and the nature of ascetical practice.

The parts of the image of Mary which remain outside these three basic concepts are marginal and on the whole deepen them. 'Mary as the Church' is the only element which really lends the image a new trait. However, this element does not represent a conceptual system: Mary is associated with the Church because it befits the narrative of the hymn, and is to be seen as a way of emphasizing her significance. Such a procedure was typical of the time of Ephesus.

In the image of Mary as a mirror of the narrative of the Incarnation is reflected the Christology of Cyril, but the resolution of Chalcedon does not appear in it: the conceptual composition of the image of Mary places the hymn's creation between the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. None of the elements of the image are found to be mutually incompatible or inconsistent with this historical context.

CHAPTER SIX

EPILOGUE

In content and rhetoric the Akathistos Hymn corresponds to the Christological homilies, which also handle the topic of the Theotokos. These homilies are not, however, ascetical, nor are they a basis for establishing what status was afforded Mary in ascetical teaching and cult; hence it is impossible to explain the 'Ascetical Virgin' with their help. In fact only the analysis has revealed how great a part of the image of Mary reflects an ascetical frame of reference. In investigating comparative material beforehand, I could not of course take this into account; but the difficulty would in any case have arisen of there being no overall research on Mary's status in the ascetical teaching or the extent or forms of her cult at so early a period. Regardless of all this, the conceptual field of the 'Ascetical Virgin' receives its explanation specifically from the context of Ephesus. Its range has been revealed partly on the basis of the explanation presented in the section on "The Veneration of Mary" on the imitation of Mary, and partly from the comparative textual analysis which makes comprehensible its spiritual foundation.

The basic concepts of the Virgin, the Second Eve and the Theotokos, which I set out for the purpose of the analysis, were a summary of how Mary's theological significance was perceived in the concluding times of the Theotokos dispute. Now that it is clear that the image of Mary in the Akathistos represents the same period, it will be important to present a picture of the development of the meaning of Mary and the main changes in her image after Ephesus. Regrettably this fundamentally important continuation in the developmental history of Mariology is unresearched to such a degree that there exists no investigation taking 'early Mariology' as its starting point which would make a true comparison possible, as Caro's otherwise valuable investigation uses concepts of modern Mariology. Despite this lack, I wish very briefly to consider what to my mind seems essential in the development in the post-Ephesian period, and distinguish it from the earlier developments.

It must be emphasized, however, that the change is not as great as the Theotokos dispute might suggest—as if the decision of Ephesus on the Theotokos had brought in a new model. Although her status as Birth-

giver of God was indeed confirmed, Mary continued as the same Second Eve and 'virgin of the prophet Isaiah' as before. The image of Mary in the homilies was affected in the same way as in the iconography—and the models are still recognizable after the passage of centuries. Thus the depiction of Mary with the attributes of place or instrument to manifest the relationship between the divine Logos and the Virgin, which came to be favoured during the Theotokos dispute, formed a standard which characterizes the Byzantine homilies. The image also changed. As I have often indicated, the striking feature of the homilies of the period of Ephesus is that the description of the Incarnation is focused on Mary's womb. At this stage, when Christological debate no longer dealt with how the Incarnation took place, the basis of the portrayal of Mary's significance changed. In the lead-up to Chalcedon the main point of debate moved increasingly from the method of the Incarnation to the unity of the person of Christ, and the *definitio fidei* of Chalcedon, which defines Christ's nature, is to be viewed as a marker of the change.

There is nothing of relevance on the 'person of Mary' in the intellectual dispute over Christ's nature. But as the images of the Incarnation were focused on the womb, which makes it impossible to speak of the person of Mary, the images of Mary in the homilies are very abstract. Here a change occurred, slowly, but certainly after Chalcedon. It is clear in homilies for example in the use of the word 'Theotokos', which comes to point ever more frequently to the two natures of Christ. But above all Mary is presented increasingly as mother (μήτηρ), which makes her image concrete. Within the limits imposed by homiletic subject-matter, the homilists might also enliven their presentations by portraying the feelings they assert Mary to have had. In the course of this sort of development the poetry of Romanos appears as a milestone: here Mary is a living person, a personality. And it is a long journey to this stage from the archaic Virgin of the Akathistos. The Ephesian image of the Mary of the Akathistos shows itself as an archaism against the later development, which means the picture there is abstract and distant and is formed from concepts distinguishable from each other relatively easily, and not from their synthesis on the level of the person of Mary.

In the course of research it has become clear that albeit Mary may be a favourite object of investigation, early Mariology, i.e. the teaching and ideas about Mary and her cult before the Council of Ephesus, has practically speaking remained outside the field of systematic scientific research. The early Church's image of Mary still awaits investigation.

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THE REFERENCES TO CHRIST IN THE AKATHISTOS HYMN

Pr. 1.4	ὁ κλίνας τῇ καταβάσει τοὺς οὐρανούς—he who bowed the heavens
Pr.1.5	ὅλος—whole
Pr. 1.6	δούλου μορφήν—the form of a servant
1.4	κύριε—O Lord
1.12	βασιλέως—the king
1.13	τὸν βαστάζοντα πάντα—him who bears all
1.14	τὸν ἥλιον—the sun
3.3	(ἐκ λαγόνων ἁγνῶν) ὑϊόν—a son (born of chaste loins)
3.8	Χριστοῦ—Christ
3.10	θεός—God
3.14	τὸ φῶς—the light
5.8	γεωργὸν φιλάνθρωπον—the tiller who loves humankind
5.9	φυτουργὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν—the cultivator of our life
7.2	Χριστοῦ—Christ
7.3	ποιμένα—the shepherd
7.4	ἀμνὸν ἄμωμον—a lamb without spot
7.6	ἀμνοῦ καὶ ποιμένος—the lamb and the shepherd
8.4	κραταιὸν ἄνακτα—the mighty king
8.5	ἄφθαστον—the unattainable
9.2	τὸν πλάσαντα χειρὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους—him who with his hand fashioned humankind
9.3	δεσπότην—their master
9.4	δούλου μορφήν—the form of a servant
9.6	ἀστέρος ἀδύτου—the star that never sets
9.11	κύριον φιλάνθρωπον (ἐπιδείξασα) Χριστόν—the Lord Christ, who loves humankind
10.4	Χριστόν—Christ
11.3	σωτήρ—O Saviour
12.4	(ὡς βρέφος) θεὸς τέλειος—(as an infant) perfect God
13.1	νέαν κτίσιν—a new creation
13.12	λυτρωτὴν αἰχμαλώτοις—the deliverer of captives
13.13	ὁδηγὸν πλανωμένοις—the guide to whose who wander astray
13.14	κριτοῦ δικαίου—the Righteous Judge
14.3	ὁ ὑψηλός—the High One
14.4	ταπεινὸς ἄνθρωπος—a humble man
15.1	ὅλος—whole
15.2	ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος—the uncircumscribed Word
15.6	θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου—the uncontainable God
15.10	τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν Χερουβίμ—who is above the Cherubim
15.11	τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν Σεραφίμ—who is above the Seraphim
15.16	Χριστοῦ—Christ
16.3	τὸν ἀπρόσιτον ὡς θεόν—God whom none can approach
16.4	πᾶσι προσιτὸν ἄνθρωπον—a human approachable by all
17.6	θεοῦ—God

ἅπτω 21.3
ἀρά, ἡ 1.7
ἁρμόζω 19.15
ἄρουρα, ἡ 5.10
ἄρρητος 12.5
ἀρρήτως 3.14
ἀρχαίος 22.1
ἀρχή, ἡ 9.10
ἀρχηγός, ὁ 19.8
ἀσάλευτος 23.12
ἀσίγητος 7.12
ᾆσμα, τό 5.5
ἄσοφος 17.8
ἀσπασμός, ὁ 5.4
ἄσπορος 2.5, 13.3, 19.14
ἀστήρ, ὁ 1.14, 8.1, 9.6
ἀστραπή, ἡ 21.8
ἀσώματος Pr. 3, 1.3
αὐγή, ἡ 9.7, 21.5
αὐλή, ἡ 7.7
ἄϋλος 21.3
αὐτεπάγγελτος 18.2
ἀφθαρσία, ἡ 13.6
ἄφθαστος 8.5
ἀφίημι 10.5
ἄφωνος 17.1
ἄχραντος 19.4
ἀχώρητος 15.6

Βαβυλῶν, ἡ 10.2
βάθος, τό 1.11
βάρβαρος 9.12
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βασιλεύς, ὁ 1.12, 20.4, 23.10
βαστάζω 1.13, 5.11
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βλαστάνω 5.10, 13.3
βλαστός, ὁ 5.6
βλέπω Pr. 6, 2.1, 13.5
βοάω 3.2, 5.5, 8.5, 9.5, 13.5, 14.5, 17.5, 20.5, 23.5, 24.5
βόρβορος, ὁ 9.13
βόσκομαι 7.5
βουλή, ἡ 3.6
βούλομαι 14.5
βρέφος, τό 5.3, 12.3
βροντή, ἡ 21.9
βυθός, ὁ 17.4

Γαβριήλ, ὁ 2.2
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γένος, τό 9.17
γέφυρα, ἡ 3.11
γεωργέω 5.8
γεωργός, ὁ 5.8
γῆ, ἡ 3.11, 7.10, 11.16, 19.3
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γιγνώσκω 3.1, 12.4
γνώρισμα, τό 7.15
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γυμνός 13.16
γυμνόω 7.16

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δείκνυμι 13.1, 17.8, 19.5
δεινός 17.10
δεκτός 5.14
δένδρον, τό 13.10
δέομαι 3.7
δεσπότης, ὁ 9.3
δέχομαι 24.3
διά 1.16, 1.17, 3.10, 7.16, 7.17, 8.4, 15.14, 15.15, 18.4, 23.14, 23.15
διάδημα, τό 23.10
διάδοχος 11.14
διάκονος, ἡ 11.15
διασπάω 17.12
διδάσκω 3.15, 23.5
δίδωμι 20.5, 22.1
δίκαιος 13.14
διόπερ 12.5
διψάω 11.11
διώκω 11.2
δόγμα, τό 3.9
δόλος, ὁ 11.9
δόξα, ἡ 7.17
δοξάζω 23.5
δοῦλος, ὁ Pr. 6, 9.4
δοχεῖον, τό 17.6
δύναμις, ἡ 4.1
δυνατός 3.4
δυσανάβατος 1.10
δυσθέωρητος 1.11
δυσώπησις, ἡ 13.14
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ἐγκρατεία, ἡ 13.7
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ἐκκλησία, ἡ 23.12
ἐκλάμπω 13.8
ἐκλείπω 1.7
ἐκπλήσσω 12.5
ἐκπλύνω 21.14
ἐκτελέω 10.3
ἐλέγχω 11.9, 17.9
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ἐνδύω 7.17
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ἐξέλκω 17.4
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ἐπίγειος 7.11
ἐπιγιγνώσκω 5.4
ἐπιδείκνυμι 9.11
ἐπιδημέω 22.3
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εὐλογέω 9.5
εὐσεβής 23.10
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κτίστης, ὁ 13.1
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